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THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XXI. No. 535 [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, MAY 24, 1941 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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THE THREAT TO SUEZ

THE German air-borne attack on Crete clearly heralds an attempt to seize Egypt and the Suez Canal by a pincer movement on lines which German strategy has familiarised. An offensive from Libya is to be accompanied by the invasion of Palestine or Iraq (probably both) by forces landed by air and sea in Syria. The Turks are subjected to pressure similar to that exerted against Jugoslavia; they will be asked to allow German material to pass through their country and the fate of the Jugoslavs will not encourage them to refuse. There is also reason to expect a new German-Soviet agreement. But at the moment everything turns on Britain's capacity to hold Crete and the highway to Syria.

The first step of the Hitler-Darlan conspiracy, the throwing open of Syrian aerodromes to German planes, has inaugurated a new and dangerous phase in British-French relations. There have already been three such distinct phases during this war. First, the early months of uneasy alliance, when neither Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax nor M. Daladier and M. Bonnet (later M. Reynaud) found much comfort in each other. With catastrophe came the heroic phase, when Mr. Churchill himself made his inspired gesture of a British-French union, when the desperate decision was taken at Oran, and General de Gaulle seemed to be emerging as leader of a great Free French movement to which France's overseas empire would rally. Unfortunately, the de Gaulle movement did not adequately correspond with political realities and the Dakar fiasco ended the "heroic" phase. There followed a period in which Britain attempted to placate Vichy. British appeasement of Vichy, however difficult to avoid in the harassed circumstances of Britain, played straight into the hands of the Nazis, who were able to put adequate pressure on Vichy at any time they chose; their aim was to keep up the pretence of a neutral France, that is, to prevent a French popular movement for de Gaulle and Britain from arising until they themselves were militarily ready to throw France into the Mediterranean war, with Dakar, North Africa, the French Navy and Syria as the counters. This is what is happening now.

Until three or four months ago there were, of course, strong arguments for a passive British policy towards Vichy: American opinion had not reached the point at which a joint British-American break with a hostile French Government was to become possible. But can there be any such justification for our policy of passivity as regards Syria, a danger-spot whose elimination was essential to Egypt's security? Syria, as a recent Mandated possession, was far less important in French eyes than the French battleships Admiral Cunningham destroyed at Oran. Mr. Eden recently seemed surprised at the Parliamentary suggestion that, with the Vichy Government's exit from the League, its Mandate over Syria had come to an end. Yet it was during his own earlier Foreign Secretaryship, on November 13th, 1936, that Léon Blum and Jamal Mardam Bey, the Syrian Premier, signed the Franco-Syrian Treaty by which the Syrian and Lebanese Republics were to gain their independence within three years of the Treaty's ratification—which Laval and Bonnet later sabotaged. Immediately after Mussolini's invasion of Greece, in our issue of November 2nd, 1940, we drew attention to a letter from a Middle Eastern correspondent, who urged that the correct answer to the new Axis coup was an immediate British-Turkish occupation of Syria. The British, he suggested, should immediately call up 30,000 Palestine Jewish auxiliaries to free British troops, and should proclaim the independent Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with the Franco-Syrian Treaty. With the appearance of a strong naval squadron, there could have been little French resistance; in this way, simultaneous Jewish and Arab support could have been mobilised in the Middle East, and British-Turkish communications completely safeguarded. As it is, we have now lost both Greece and most of the Greek islands; we have seen the first German forces arrive in Syria; currying Arab favour, we have left the Palestine Jews, who might have helped in Syria, unmobilised and have been repaid by the Iraqi Arab rising; we have let Turkey be encircled for Vichy's sake, but have gained only hostility from Vichy. The northern arm of the German pincers constitutes a threat

which can be countered only by the swiftest possible action against Syria; but past delays are likely to cost us dear.

West of the Suez Canal, General Wavell's situation is more hopeful. Though the frustrated attempt of General Masri Pasha, ex-Chief of the Egyptian General Staff, to fly to Baghdad is an unwelcome sign of Axis infiltration in Cairo, the inability of the German Panzer divisions to advance beyond Sollum is definitely encouraging. In that area fierce localised engagements between British and German armoured forces have been inconclusive, both sides claiming the destruction of enemy tanks and the capture of prisoners. The significant thing is that General Rommel's advance has been substantially halted: he has failed to reduce Tobruk, and though last week-end's operations round Fort Capuzzo showed that German advanced forces could succeed in counter-attack, the initiative remains tactically with General Wavell. How long it can be so retained we have yet to see. So far, the R.A.F. appears to hold the upper hand in Libya; but German air reinforcements are to be expected in that sector, and Rommel may find means to solve his immediate problem—how to supply, east of Derna, armoured forces capable of decisive action against or round Mersa Matruh. Meanwhile, every day gained strengthens Wavell's hand. With the Duke of Aosta's capitulation at Amba Alagi, the Abyssinian campaign is practically finished. The pockets of Italian resistance centred at Gondar and Jimma can be subdued by Patriot columns without much need of assistance from Imperial troops. Haile Selassie, dramatically restored to the Throne of the King of Kings, may have troublesome problems of political tutelage to thrash out with the Dominions Office and the Union Government: from Mussolini he has nothing locally to fear. And from the Indian, East African and South African divisions now released from Abyssinia, General Wavell can draw reinforcements urgently needed in the Nile Delta before General Rommel has time to develop his main offensive. The unknown factor is the ability of the British Command in Iraq to "liquidate" Raschid Ali before the arrival in strength of German air-borne reinforcements in the area between Mosul and Haditha. Iraqi pressure on the Habbaniya airfield appears to have been relieved by the advance of mechanised British troops to Falluja, securing the bridge across the Euphrates; but so long as Syria remains in Axis hands the threat to Suez is critical.

Labour and the War

In preparation for the Labour Party's Annual Conference at Whitsun, Transport House has issued a twopenny pamphlet on *Labour in the Government*. Recalling the part that Labour played last summer in co-operating with the Churchill Tories to meet the threat of invasion, it quotes the Government's promise to subordinate property as well as life to the common cause and provides a list of social improvements that have been made during the war. These include increased provision of milk for children and mothers, the new Unemployment Insurance Act, improvement in Workmen's Compensation, in the wages of agricultural labourers, in allowances for the families of men on service, the abolition of casual labour at the docks, efforts to prevent profiteering in rents and prices and increases in various types of pensions. How far this list of improvements, all necessary and good in themselves, will satisfy the Party Conference about Labour's share in the Government we will not venture to prophesy. The Labour Ministers have shown themselves, for the most part, good departmental heads. But none of them has emerged as they surely could have done and still could do to give an imaginative and creative lead on the Home Front as Mr. Churchill has done in the sphere of strategy and defence. But it is still too clear that little has been done to overcome the resistance to siege economics; that the structure of our society remains obstinately impervious to war necessities and that rationing and control lag behind while ramps and inequalities do far more damage to morale than the Blitz itself. Concessions to working class need are fairly quoted in this pamphlet, but there is no sign of the kind of leadership that would make workers feel that this was indeed a war for a better social order here, nor as our correspondence columns reveal this week, can the rank and file feel, in view of events in India, that Labour in office has in any way stood for the anti-Imperialist policy to which the party is pledged.

Economic Notes (*From an Industrial Correspondent*)

Recent German air attacks on this country have been directed much more scientifically than their predecessors at special industrial objectives, though the ever-increasing heights at which the bombers have to fly make it more difficult to hit particular targets within the areas selected for mass-attack. It seems as if the main objectives of recent raiding have been, first, to do as much damage as possible to ports, both naval and mercantile, in order to hamper the arrival and unloading of supplies and also to slow down the repair of damaged vessels, and, secondly, to attack the factory areas. This growing concentration on economic objectives—varied by an occasional display of mere "frightful" destructiveness, is of course the natural complement to the Battle of the Atlantic, and the natural reply to the most recent American measures. Factories are much more difficult to put out of action than crowded residential districts, especially when they are modern and spread over a large surface area. A lucky hit on a key spot can put a whole plant out of action for some time; but key spots cannot as a rule be singled out for bombing; and in many raids, even recently, the upset to production even from heavy attacks has been much less than might have been expected. The policy of dispersal of vital plants, where it has been followed, has been amply justified: the pity is that the need was not understood sooner, and that so many of the new factories were built much too large and concentrated, from the standpoint of vulnerability as well as from that of labour supply.

* * *

Steps are at last being taken to reorganise at any rate a section of the building industry with a view to the better use of the available labour. It is high time. The building industry is both very highly localised in its forms of organisation, and, apart from the few big contracting firms, broken up into very small units. The process of transferring building workers from place to place in connection with new Government building or clearance and repair work in blitzed areas has been a continual source of trouble ever since the war began. Labour turnover on many contracts has been almost incredibly high, and has seriously lowered efficiency, and led to a great waste of workers. Moreover, even since the permit system was extended, many ways have been found of evading the restrictions on the use of building labour for unessential purposes. Some of this has been the fault of contractors, who have often expected the men engaged on important contracts to accept, month after month, nearly intolerable living conditions. But much of it is due to the unorganised state of the industry, which has always been accustomed to discontinuous conditions of work. The mobile squads of builders which are now to be created ought to have been started a year ago; and the Regional Commissioners ought to be given much more power than they now possess over the whole industry, except the sections engaged on direct Government work. But the new mobile squads are at any rate a beginning; and it is manifestly right that they should extend to civil engineering as well as to ordinary building work—for very often after a blitz the most essential task of all is the speedy restoration to full working order of the services supplying water and power.

* * *

The food trades have been left out of the terms of reference of the Board of Trade Committee which is to enquire into the very difficult problem of "concentration" in the distributive trades. These trades are undoubtedly one of the big remaining sources from which man- and woman-power can be drawn for essential war work; and it has been plain for some time that they would have to be tackled soon, however reluctant the Government might be. Presumably the food trades have been left out for the moment because they are the concern of the Ministry of Food rather than of the Board of Trade. But they can hardly be left out when action is taken, even though rationing throws much extra work on the food traders and thus reduces the amount of labour that can be withdrawn without causing dangerous confusion. What puzzles me is how the food trader can be excluded in practice when so many shops, small as well as large, sell both foods and other classes of goods. Is Woolworth's a food trading concern, or not? Is Selfridge's, and, what is even more diffficult in practice, is the little village shop which sells almost anything from a pot of jam to a hayfork?

* * *

The root difficulty, of course, is not this of definition, but that of meting out what can be regarded as tolerably even treatment to the various classes of traders. The Co-operative movement will be quick to resent anything that appears to give preferential treatment to chain stores, department stores, or small private shopkeepers. The private shopkeepers, who are most in danger of being squeezed out permanently, will be highly suspicious both of the chain and department stores, and of the Co-ops. Joint trading arrangements between Co-ops. and establishments trading for profit appear to be out of the question; and "concentration" cannot easily be applied to one-man businesses without causing hardships which will be deeply resented. There are of course the reasons why the problem has not

been tackled long ago. The Government hoped that a great many shopkeepers would be forced to close down and to seek work elsewhere by sheer economic pressure, and would therefore be the less disposed to blame it for their misfortunes. But, except in areas which have been badly bombed or extensively evacuated, this has not happened much, because trading margins have been so high as to afford the means of keeping going comfortably, even with a greatly reduced turnover. So now the problem of small shops as well as large will have to be tackled directly from the man-power standpoint; and it takes no great prescience to prophesy that there are plenty of troubles ahead.

* * *

What are to be the relations between Ernest Bevin, as Chairman of the Production Executive, and Lord Beaverbrook, as deputy-chairman of the supply section of the Defence Committee, over which the Prime Minister has hitherto presided in person? On the face of the matter, it looks as if Mr. Bevin has been superseded as chief co-ordinator of the production services, and Lord Beaverbrook put in his place; for Mr. Churchill's statement seems to imply that Lord Beaverbrook, as "referee," is to have the last word. A further question is—How do these changes link up with the unspecified tasks which Generals Haining and Wemyss have just taken over at the War Office? These two Generals are well known to be among the best administrative minds in the Army; and they have both been notable successes in their previous organising jobs. Are they the army side of a new war supply organisation of which Lord Beaverbrook is the civil side? If so, it looks as if the Ministry of Labour will be reduced to an inferior role, and as if Mr. Bevin is following Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Attlee into a status of comparative lack of influence over general home and economic policy. Should this prove to be the case, I wonder whether Mr. Bevin will accept his demotion as placidly as his colleagues? I guess not.

The "Allied Powers" Bill (*By a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

In its new quarters the House of Commons proved itself full of life this week. Shinwell, Aneurin Bevan and Silverman all put up an important and successful fight. The cause of the trouble was the clause of the Allied Powers (Maritime Courts) Bill which made the effect of the Bill retrospective not only for major crime but for minor offences as well. For two solid hours on the last sitting day of last week the Government fought the opposition. First they reduced the retrospective period to twelve months, then to six months, but they were adamant in their contention that all offences must come under the retrospective clause. As a result the matter was pushed to a division, in which only 14 or 15 members voted against the Government. Instead of the Government getting their Bill last week, the Committee stage had to be carried over to the first sitting day of this week. In the meantime the Government consulted the Allied Powers themselves, and for the first time the Seamen's Unions. As a result, to-day the Government came to the House with an amendment to the retrospective clause which conceded everything demanded by Shinwell and his supporters. In effect, the Government had to admit that it had wasted the time of the House by introducing slipshod legislation, and then closing its ears to the weight of argument brought to bear against its mistakes. Then, after ignoring the House and securing its will by driving its supporters into the lobby like a flock of sheep, it very properly gave way to superior argument. Incidentally it succeeded in dividing the Labour Party against itself. This episode gave Shinwell and Aneurin Bevan the opportunity to impress upon the House the need for an organised Opposition, if only to vet legislation thoroughly before it reaches the Statute Book. The necessity for such an organised Opposition to criticise legislative proposals, if nothing else, is emphasised by the fact that the Law Officers, the Home Office and the Ministry of War Communications were all involved in producing these defective legislative proposals which they now admit would have hampered instead of helping the war effort.

During the day the Prime Minister made two statements on the war situation. His overwhelming personal ascendancy over the House was well illustrated by the uncritical tolerance with which the trifling character of the statements which he made, and for which it was difficult to understand the necessity, were accepted.

On the last sitting day of last week, when the Prime Minister stated the business for the next sitting days, there was a discussion on secret sessions. There is obviously a growing body of opinion in the House against frequent secret sessions, unless Ministers have vital information to impart. Ministers should not get into the habit of asking for their departments to be discussed in secret; public criticism of their work is vitally necessary.

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POSTAGE on this issue is: Inland, 1½d.; Foreign, 1d.; Canada, 1d.

MR. MORRISON'S OPPORTUNITY

OUR existing local government boundaries are irrelevant to wartime requirements. Experts have long known that they were irrelevant to the peacetime requirements of a modern community. War, as so often, displays the necessity for changes that are too difficult in normal times. Mr. Morrison can now carry out great reforms without serious opposition. Facts have put local government functions and boundaries into a melting-pot. The emergency compels change. The central organisation of fire-fighting should have been put through months ago; we are grateful that it is to be done now. But the Battle of the Flames, which Mr. Morrison rightly puts on a level with the Battle of the Atlantic, does not merely involve fire-fighting. It comprises such problems as food and rest shelter provision, evacuation, billeting, transport and other technical services. The *Times* now asks, with the apparent fervour of a recent convert, how much longer we are to keep up the pretence that daily invasion from the air crashing down on our large cities can be treated as a new department of local government and tacked on to normal peace administration. After nine months' experience of bombing, it continues, it would be scandalous to shirk the need for radical change. Nine months is too long a period of gestation for a wartime measure of defence and also for the birth of the idea in Printing House Square. It is something that the agitation for action is now clothed with respectability and is no longer the monopoly of bilious critics. The delay has entailed immense confusion, and unnecessary suffering and loss to the victims of air attacks. The farcical feature of the problem is that if half a hundred German parachutists landed in any particular area the Regional Commissioner would come into full operation with powers of life and death over the citizenry. If instead of landing with a few tommy-guns several hundred enemy airmen rain down thousands of high explosive and incendiary bombs, the problem remains strictly parochial and the municipal boundary limits the sphere of unitary action. Any inhabitant who steps over the border to sleep the night on the moors automatically forfeits a claim on the emergency blankets stored at the town hall. Billeting, feeding, transport and shelter provision are functions exercised autonomously by the relatively microcosmic areas of peacetime local government. The case for the single large responsible unit is overwhelming. It may be that the areas under the Regional Commissioners are too large for the direct administration of all the functions imposed by air bombardment, but the first step is to impose the general duty and responsibility on the Commissioners and to require them to take immediate executive action in co-ordinating all air-raid services within their area, with all the necessary delegation to appropriate bodies inside the scheme. The detailed proposals laid down in the *Times* of May 16th are excellent.

Along with functions and boundaries, local finance has become obviously absurd, although the Central Government continues desperately to stave off recognition of the fact. The official attitude towards local financial problems is typical of the failure to grasp the full implications of total war. At first local areas badly hit by imposed or voluntary evacuation were expected to accept the resulting financial burden as if it were an ordinary example of peaceful change. They were actually instructed not to worry the Government until their rates had reached the distress levels of Merthyr Tydvil fame. After that they could apply for permission to borrow. Only of late have special grants in aid been accorded, and the proud and independent City of London has not disdained to accept such relief. But there is no general principle, and time is still wasted in the House by members making special representations on behalf of their constituencies. There is a widespread feeling of injustice which frequently takes the form of bitter and unwarranted criticism of people who have emptied their houses, moved to other parts, and left the remaining inhabitants to shoulder not only the physical burden of fire-watching, but the additional financial burden on the rates. No wonder the *Observer*, in a survey of the problem, tentatively suggests that we may come to an equalisation and pooling of rates over large districts. The logical solution is probably the abolition of local rating for the duration, and the financing of so-called "local" expenditure out of the Central Exchequer. What relevance have peacetime rating assessments to wartime values and capacity to pay? A householder impoverished by war circumstances may be stranded in a house assessed at £100: in a reception area a £30 house may be crammed with war workers whose combined weekly incomes total up to this figure. The whole monetary mechanism of war finance could with advantage, equity and economy be administered from the centre

As an example of the complete obsolescence of local finance, we can refer to the derating provisions of the 1929 reform which are still in force. These provisions, which were always illogical, were a contemporary expedient to assist the depressed heavy industries and agriculture, which are now foremost in enjoying wartime prosperity. The present moment is a good opportunity to get rid of this anomaly.

Mr. Morrison, who will have to carry the Ministry of Health with him, has the experience, vision and energy to set on foot great changes in local government organisation. In doing so, he will be making an immense contribution towards war organisation and preparing the way for future reconstruction. But for the moment the essential is to give the public confidence that the administration is sound and that the needs of the poor, who suffer incomparably greater hardships in the blitz, are given paramount consideration. Communal feeding, better rationing, efficient evacuation, care for the homeless, swift restoration of local services—these depend to a large degree on proper area administration. The lesson of East London last autumn was clear; the old, small, overlapping local authorities cannot, with the best will in the world, meet the case. Commissioners from Whitehall are no substitute for local initiative. The immediate solution is the appointment of picked local leaders who, in conjunction with Whitehall experts, have full powers and financial resources to make provision beforehand to meet the urgent needs that arise with every series of heavy attacks from the air. And from such emergency arrangements, the way will be paved for the inevitable reorganisation of post-war local government.

AMERICA PLANS AHEAD

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT]

WHEN Mr. Greenwood and Lord Reith are busy preparing blue prints for a better Britain, current American attitude towards planning and conservation should be of more than local interest. Briefly, wielding science and technology, the civilised man is fast destroying the basis of civilised life. He is using irreplaceable materials at an alarmingly rapid rate—dissipating stored energy too fast. "For the bulk of our energy we shamelessly sponge off the past ages." We shall have to restrict our dependence on stored reserves and learn how to harness the "natural cycle" with an efficiency far beyond anything this generation has achieved. Much of our scientific and engineering research should be directed towards expanding the means of substituting recurring for exhaustible sources of energy and materials. Only cultures that have made peace with themselves and nature by establishing some sort of balance and harmony have survived. The price of wrong adjustment all through the ages had been extinction. Conservation is a debt we owe to posterity. The food-fuel cycle forms the fundamental basis of the world's material economy. A greater distinction should be drawn between the use of irreplaceable capital and recurring products which the sun lavishes on us. A few examples follow:

The United States Mineral Policy Committee recently gave estimates of reserves of America's power minerals and metals with the important proviso that factors of price, new industrial demands and technological improvements are likely to upset even the most exacting estimates. The country's coal deposits are sufficient to last another 4,000 to 5,000 years. Iron ore, sulphur, bauxite and molybdenite should last far beyond the period for present concern. Oil, lead, silver, gold, copper and zinc, on the other hand, are commodities whose reserve life can be calculated in decades considering only their present rate of consumption. Of these oil is likely to last another forty years, lead and silver could conceivably be exhausted in twenty years, while copper and zinc should last somewhat longer than lead and silver. The domestic supply is already deficient in manganese, chromium, tungsten and mercury, while tin and nickel are virtually non-existent. America could, however, under stress of war or behind tariff walls, considerably augment her domestic production of mercury, tungsten, chromium and manganese. Metals and fuel minerals must therefore be used sparingly and only where they are indispensable. Exploitation of relatively abundant low-grade ores and re-use of scrap are to be encouraged. Waste products like smelter gases and slags and by-products of coal and oil such as toluol, glycerine, industrial solvents, synthetic resins and rubber must be reclaimed in ever-increasing quantities. Measures for making effective use of stored resources for a "long pull" must be formulated and put into force. Coal is not only the major source of energy but a processing material as well in the production of synthetic products like nylon, alcohols, plastics, rubber and nitrogenous fertilisers. Under favourable conditions hydro-electric plants—harnessing a recurring source of energy—are being built. The Administration-sponsored water-power projects now account for over two million k.w. and their ultimate capacity will reach 6,762,000 k.w. The T.V.A. is already providing power to the Aluminium and Reynolds Metal companies for the production and fabrication of the metal indispensable for aircraft construction. The new Vancouver (Washington) plant of the Aluminium Company of America is using 162,500 k.w. of Bonneville power from the Grand Coulee Dam—a combined irrigation and power project. Additional cheap power will be on the market when the Shasta Dam of the Central Valley Project is completed. This will be made use of by the Union Carbide Corporation for manufacturing such key commodities as calcium carbide and ferro-alloys. Even the oil industry, whose exploitation methods entailed enormous waste in the past, is increasingly adopting the more rational "unit" system of management.

To turn from the mineral to the vegetable kingdom, with nitrogen and potash, phosphorus supplies the major part of food minerals needed by growing crops. A pound of phosphorus makes it possible for leguminous plants and their attached bacteria to "fix" five pounds of nitrogen from the air into the soil. America has large phosphate deposits in Tennessee, Florida and the Far West. At the same time the growing plants produce sugars, starches, cellulose and proteins from air and water. By applying a comparatively small quantity of phosphorus, as is being done by the Administration under the A.A.A., the quantity of recurring resources is multiplied and rendered available for continuous use year after year. Past methods of cultivating cotton left the land exposed to erosion by water. About thirteen tons of top soil was lost from the lands of the Cotton Belt for every bale of the crop, and export of cotton seed is another loss, both resulting in low incomes and a poor market for domestic manufactures. By arresting erosion, by afforestation, dry farming, judicious application of manures and extension of the system of crop rotation with legumes, the fertility of land is built up to yield bigger crops and hence more available energy. America is growing more energy and raw materials for industry on the farm without depleting the soil. Nearly half the products—vegetable oils, corn products, wood pulp, turpentine and pine resin, linters and purified cotton and cotton fabrics—of the farm and forest find their way into industry. Making things synthetic does not lessen our age-old dependence on nature—it simply changes one natural source of supply for another, exhaustible or stored products for recurring sources like crops, forest products and water power. Thus du Pont, the American chemical manufacturing firm, makes synthetic urea for fertilisers, methyl alcohol for anti-freeze, nylon for hosiery and other products from inexhaustible air and water supplemented by exhaustible coal. The general trend of development is one of working with nature, human actions forming part of the natural cycle. America has launched a country-wide educational campaign on nutrition as part of her national defence efforts. Mr. Paul W. Nutt now co-ordinates all health, medical, welfare, nutrition, recreation and other related fields of activity. This is certainly a more realistic approach to the problem than ploughing in crops and paying farmers for not cultivating specified crops, since nearly a third of the American people are still reported to be unable to maintain themselves in health and comfort, because of inadequate incomes, while the country has ample resources. As Mr. Winant put it, "we could not expect that a citizen with no share in the benefits of democracy will give his faith and his life for its preservation on the empty promises of democracy." "Political freedom cannot survive if economic freedom is lost" is one of the many striking statements found in the Report of the Temporary National Economic Committee published last month (April, 1941). The T.N.E.C. brings out the significant fact that 45 per cent. of the defence contracts have gone to six closely related corporations and 80 per cent. of the work to sixty-two companies or inter-related groups. It recommends licensing of corporations, revision and stern application of anti-trust laws and changing the procedure of guaranteeing patent rights so as to make patents available to everyone ready to pay a fair price to the inventor. These, then, are some of the ideas and ideals animating President Roosevelt's Administration in the domestic field.

Coming to international affairs, last time the Allies won the war but lost the peace for two reasons. Isolationists, who dominated America's legislative attitude on foreign affairs, prevented ratification of the League in 1920. Also, farseeing men like Colonel House and General Smuts confessed how imperfect the Versailles Treaty was, not least in its lack of large-scale economic planning. Unless we make reform and rehabilitation rather than retribution the basis of our policy the history of the world of the last two decades would repeat itself. We must start from man's need and plan for a world of plenty.

The beneficent activities of the Surplus Commodities Corporation in America and the labours of Messrs. Bruce and McDougall have shown the close relation of nutrition to national health, agriculture and economic policy. The twin problems of demobilisation and reconstruction will confront the post-war world everywhere. The Eighth American Science Congress held in Washington last May recommended the setting up of an inter-American Conservation Commission, in co-operation with the Pan-American Union and representing all the Americas, entrusted with "preparing an inventory of world natural resources and formulating a general policy and specific programme of action to promote mutual conservation and prudent utilisation of natural resources for the welfare of all nations in the interest of permanent peace." From the present American economic collaboration for the more effective prosecution of the war there will assuredly emerge a peace-time conception approximating to the world resources boards and world-planning committees. Enjoying a measure of detachment from the actual horrors of war, and animated by generous and human sympathies, the pragmatic people of the United States have leisure to think out a better peace plan now. No nation, not even the British Empire, can by itself find the right solution for economic and social problems that will inevitably confront the world following this moloch of mechanised total war. Fortunately for the Allies and the whole world, President Roosevelt has pledged America's co-operation in winning the war and ensuring a just and durable peace this time.

NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE

NINE months of bombs and a series of destructive fire blitzes have at last compelled the Government to set up a National Fire Service. Four and a half months after the Second Great Fire of London the Home Secretary has applied the lessons of bitter experience. What Mr. Herbert Morrison has called the "Battle of the Flames" rivals the "Battle of the Atlantic," of which it is the corollary. In both, heavy losses have been sustained. In both, there is a serious threat to our food supplies. In both, we can lose the vital machines of war; to lose a war-production factory at home is at least as serious as losing shiploads of materials at sea. The one sears the muscles; the other cuts the sinews.

But we do not expect the Saucy Sallies of Dunkirk to wage the Battle of the Atlantic. We have been fighting the fire-blitzes with that same spirit as that muster of little craft and scratch crews. The regular firemen and the A.F.S. have more than earned those spontaneous cheers that greet even a glimpse of them in the newsreels. One recalls the "Grey Appliance Boys" on the night of the Great Fire of London, on 29th December, singing "Our John's a fireman" in the heart of a blazing target, and rushing cheerfully down alleys which looked like furnace doors. Fine! The men and women who once took to shelters on an Alert now handle incendiaries—"Catch 'em in our teeth and spit 'em out." Fine! Fire-watchers have taken to the roofs like the spotters whom a few brief months ago we regarded as rare heroes. Fine! But "their finest hour" has become weeks and months. They need all the resources the nation can give them. They are the non-combatant Home Guard, but they need a well-equipped standing army behind them. That is what the Home Secretary has promised a House which was violently critical of the failures and frank about the effects of the fire-blitzes, about which most of us have been reticent for security reasons.

There has, throughout, been a "Shadow National Fire Service." There has been a Central "Operations Room," with a Controller. There have been Regional Fire Officers directing at the various regional headquarters. There has been a system of district reinforcements, with the right to call for more help from Region, and, through Region, from Central "Operations Room."

There have been snags. With the traditional independence of British local authorities, each locality had its own particular form of fire-fittings, just as they had their own fashions in policemen's helmets. There are, I understand, several hundreds of different types of hydrant fittings throughout the country. The hoses of incoming reinforcements would not fit the local hydrants or link up with the local hoses. So each authority was instructed to provide adaptors suitable for the equipment of any reinforcing brigade likely to come in.

Each brigade being autonomous, each having its own rankings and its own symbols, there were awkward questions of precedence. In any event, the O.C. was, automatically, the local fire chief. He might be the local chief-of-police, combining, even in a great city like Manchester, the job of Fire Chief. He might be an officer with very limited experience of fire-fighting, but the high-powered senior officers of an incoming brigade, with intensive experience both of fires and of blitzes, would be subordinate to him. Over and over again firemen have complained that they did not know who was who and from whom they were expected to take orders. As one fireman said to me after a provincial blitz, "I haven't seen so many uniforms since the fire at Willie Clarkson's."

Experienced brigades travel in convoy with commissariat, mobile canteens, quartermasters and billeting officers. But they have found, in the past, that they were invariably called upon to feed and help to billet other brigades, who travelled unprovided. Repeatedly, I have found firemen exhausted by want of proper food after long hours of desperate fire-fighting. I shall never forget taking a sack of meat pies into a blitzed town and the ravenous way the A.F.S. men fell upon them. In short, our "Shadow National Fire Service" has meant "mutual aid" but not "co-ordination." And that is what Herbert Morrison has set out to put right.

The task is a big one. It is also one which demands speed and intensive organisation. There is neither time nor excuse for half-measures. The Home Secretary has to repair the mistakes of his predecessors. And particularly the mistakes of Sir Samuel Hoare.

Sir Samuel Hoare and the Appeasement Government have a lot to answer for. The Fire Brigades Act of 1938 is to blame for much of our unpreparedness for "The Battle of the Flames." It was the first Fire Bill for forty years. It was brought before Parliament under threat of war. It was a classic example of the mentality of the Men of Munich. Those were the days when Sir Samuel and Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd were telling us what horrid little devils incendiaries were, and what you and I ought to do about them if our homes were not to be burned out. So they at least knew something of the menace.

Yet the Act, ignoring the obvious need for a National Fire Service, threw all the responsibility back on the local authorities in the most cynical way. Sir Samuel argued, with the same blandness and in the same terms as he had done in the A.R.P. Act, that it would not mean "more than a penny rate," and that equipment supplementary to ordinary peacetime needs would be supplied out of the £1½ million Exchequer fund for A.R.P. fire pumps, etc. Anyway, this fly-blown Act, years behind peacetime needs, not to mention the needs of the impending war, cynically ignored even the modest proposals of the Riverdale Committee, which had at least advised financial aid to local authorities in putting their house in order.

Morrison has now to repair the follies of an Act of which he was one of the critics. He has got to wrestle with the local authorities over things like taking over the municipal fire-stations, compensating the local chief constable for having his fireman's helmet and emoluments taken from him, and all that kind of balance-sheet business. That is less important than the shape he makes of the National Fire Service as an organised force. He is going to find, when he calls the roll, that in some places a fire-brigade as a separate force does not exist—that, as in an important and populous town I was in last week-end, not only the police-chief, but the police force, doubles the role of the fire-brigade, changing uniforms like a vaudeville act. In his Siamese-twin capacity as Home Secretary and Minister for Home Security he will have to operate on Siamese-twin services. How any authority, central or local, could have connived at such duality in war beats me, but they are protected by the 1938 Act—at least, until 1943.

But the same duality crops up in his own department. Mr. Mabane, M.P., his Under-Secretary, is put in charge of the Fire-fighting Services as well as the other Civil Defence Services. Miss Ellen Wilkinson, his other Under-Secretary on the Home Security side, takes on the fire-watching service as well as shelters. The differentiation has been very nicely explained to me. Mabane is responsible for an organised and disciplined force, and Ellen for the community service, where the need is to stimulate and inspire the individuals. No doubt there is sense in the distinction, and it is over-rational to think of fire-prevention and fire-fighting as complementary and composite, worthy of the undivided attention of an Under-Secretary for some time to come. Incidentally, Sir Arthur Dixon, Permanent Under-Secretary, is also fire services *and* police.

There is going to be at least an Advisory Committee, on which local authorities will be represented. That is no doubt necessary for ironing out the difficulties between State and Local Government, but those who have seen the fire-blitz problems at first hand and have most reason to be concerned about them are more preoccupied with the form the administration of the Service

will take. It is right that the Regions should be in charge of field operations, so to speak, just as there is sense in having separate Army Commands. On the Regions will fall the tactical organisation and the Front Line battles with the flames.

But what of the Central Control? It would be useless having a commander-in-chief, but it would be sensible to have a Fire Council. Just as the Army Council replaced the C.-in-C. British Armies (except the *ad hoc* C.-in-C.'s of expeditionary forces), so would the Fire Council be the composite supreme command.

Such a Fire Council, equivalent to the Army Council, the Air Council and the Board of Admiralty, would consist of the two Under-Secretaries, a fireman Chief of Staff, and at least three other Service members, for Personnel, for Equipment and Supply and for Training. In addition, there should be a representative expert of the waterworks authorities, and a welfare member who ought to be a representative of the Trade Union movement, since both on the fire-fighting and fire-watching sides there is need for better understanding. And, of course, an undivided Sir Arthur Dixon.

Morrison has announced the Chief of Staff and an Inspector General. There ought also to be a number of staff officers capable of going out and either advising or directing in difficult instances. They would be specialists. At least one of the members of the Fire Council should be from the A.F.S. For it is abundantly plain (and admitted by enlightened regular fire brigade chiefs) that a lot of the key men in the Service will have to be recruited from the Auxiliary Firemen. Indeed, one of the jobs will be to bring back some of the best A.F.S. leaders who have quit, for sundry and justifiable reasons, or who have gone into the fighting services. A.F.S. men, recruited from all walks of life, can provide the organisational staffs and, in many cases, some of the best fire-fighters. There certainly must not be any discrimination between the "Regulars" and the "Territorials" in the new service. The A.F.S., now 80,000 full-time and 150,000 part-time (compared with 6,000 firemen pre-war) have won their spurs.

Nor must the high officers of the National Fire Service be the "dug-outs" of the peacetime fire brigades. The Battle of the Flames is not a job for superannuated fire chiefs, who are "still fighting the Tooley Street fire" as some old Army wallahs go on fighting the Matabele War. There is no possible comparison between peacetime fire-fighting and the accumulative effects of a fire-blitz, any more than there is between assegais and Tommy-guns. That, I think, should certainly have been impressed upon the Home Office by what has happened in certain places.

There are veterans of a dozen blitzes, men still young enough to adapt themselves and their ideas and their methods, who have the experience necessary for the new fire O.C.'s. There are many A.F.S. leaders who have earned highest recognition. Traditional training does not count so much as first-hand experience and gumption. Instinct for leadership and ingenuity in meeting swiftly changing situations, alert minds which will improvise, and, just as important, open minds to receive ideas, are what are needed.

In a unified service the old rivalries between the "Red Appliance Boys" and the "Grey Appliance Boys" should count as little when it comes to promotions as it does when they share common dangers. The Minister for Home Security has fine material to work with in his unified fire-fighting force. When the fire-watching scheme is straightened out the "ordinary blokes" will not fail him, either. But the organisation and resources of the National Fire Service must not be a compromise, but on a proper war footing. There must be the powerful striking arm of the National Fire Service behind the spirit of the Saucy Sallies, behind the women who sally out fire-watching through the shrapnel and bombs—"*C'est magnifique mais ce n'est pas la guerre.*" They prove that we are with him when he says we have a duty.

So has the Government, as his predecessor "Ladybird" Hoare failed to appreciate.

RITCHIE CALDER

A LONDON DIARY

THE Hess incident has provided some superb comic relief in an otherwise unrelieved tragedy. Nothing ever so exposed the confusion in people's minds. A man who has nice manners, good connections and a gold identity disc cannot very well be called a gangster, even by those who will talk nonsense about all the German people being gangsters. He becomes an idealist—and an idealist, of course, he is in the strict sense that most of the Nazi leaders are inspired to the limits of violence and cruelty by a fanatical devotion to the Nazi idea. Hence the questions about what to do with Hess, and the answers, ranging from torture to reception at Buckingham Palace. Mr. Churchill has not thought it wise yet to add to our knowledge, but the main facts seem clear enough. Hess came apparently without the Führer's knowledge, in the hope of influencing people whom he imagined to be sympathetic here to effect a peace which would leave the Nazis in charge of the Continent, the Near East and parts of the British Empire. The terms scarcely seem serious, since Hitler apparently does not offer them. But Hess was not speaking for himself alone. He represents the forebodings of people everywhere and particularly of the German people at the prospect of a prolonged battle of rival bombing with America supporting Britain, and in particular he represents the group which regards war with England as the "wrong" war. I was not surprised to see that the Haushofers, father and son, and other associates of Hess have been arrested. There is reason to think that they are disquieted about Hitler's relations with Stalin as long as war persists between England and Germany. While war might mean a swift victory, followed by a struggle of incalculable duration, friendly contact with Stalin may involve, in their view, a dangerous fraternisation with Bolshevism—almost as dangerous as war on two fronts. No one in his senses should have expected to get from Hess details of military secrets; even if he knew them he would not divulge them, but there are facts of the first importance which should be obtainable from Hess. His visit is the proof of a split, the proof that there are not two but several Germanys and it gives British propaganda a great opportunity which, from the immediate point of view of further embarrassing the already comically confused German explanations about Hess's flight, has been admirably used. But if full use is to be made of the Hess and other incidents, we need now even more than ever a decision about what we are fighting for; how otherwise know the right appeal to the different groups beneath the surface unity of Germany?

* * *

I see that the Bishop of Bristol has been getting into hot water from the noisier kind of patriots for suggesting that we ought to make a move towards an arrangement to limit night-bombing on both sides. But the more I think about it, the less "sentimental" the idea seems to me. The British Government, very sensibly, I thought, made one announcement on these lines when it warned the Italians that Rome would be bombed if Athens and Cairo were bombed. That is to say, it used our growing strength in the air, not in ways which were bound to lead to general and inconclusive destruction, but in a way which was likely to impress the enemy and incidentally to save important centres of civilisation. It was a welcome attempt to use brain as well as bombing power. Increasingly unintelligent violence is the usual story of war. First, something is "unthinkable," then both sides think of it, then there is hesitation about doing it because the other man may do it to you; then there are reckless people who start it in the belief that it pays to get in first; this merely has the effect of strengthening the resolution of the other side, which retaliates in kind. Logically, then, you go through all the stages of a kind of gentlemanly, kid-gloves war at the beginning, changing to general fighting, then to bombing military objectives, then to bombing civilians, then to indiscriminate destruction from the air, then no doubt to gas, bacteriological warfare, and all the other horrors that science can invent. So far it has been difficult for Britain to do anything to arrest this process, because our inferiority in the air has been so great. But if the British can show that with American help and the largest calibre bombs they can now do damage on a similar scale to Germany, and then offer to forbear from bombing open towns if Germany will do the same, no harm can be done, since if Germany broke the pact we could start again at once, while in any case we should gain by putting the onus of refusal upon Hitler. The outside world would at least know that we were not willingly and wantonly engaging in this lunatic game of mutual suicide. Somebody said to me the other day that they thought that the underlying cause of what is happening in the world is hatred of twentieth-century civilisation. That is obviously true in Germany; sometimes I think it is true in this country, too.

* * *

Why, people ask me, should the B.B.C. news bulletins be so intolerably empty and monotonous? The official communiqués, score of 'planes brought down, the record of British bombing in Germany, the commonplace remarks of Ministers engaged on the War Savings Campaign, little military news from the Near East, and that is about all. And yet the world has not stood still. Why do we not have news about lives of people on the home front, which is now also the front line? Why do we not hear the details, as we should if there were a disaster in time of peace, about the provision being made in Plymouth for the people whose homes have gone? Why not describe what is happening in Liverpool or Belfast or Coventry? The everyday lives of 40 million people have not ceased to be of interest because a lot

of airmen are trying to kill them. I agree very wholeheartedly with people who ask these questions. The news is almost intolerably dull and repetitious. Most people that I know turn it on for a few minutes, listen to the summary to see if there is anything fresh, and then promptly turn it off. Whose fault is this, and how can the matter be remedied? It is no use, I know, to blame the people who construct the bulletins. They might vary the order of the news a little more, but they cannot make any substantial change because they can only use the material that comes over the tapes. They might, perhaps, present the news in a more lively way: the English news on the foreign service (you can pick it up at midnight and on the old Welsh Regional wavelength) shows what can be done. But if the British public is to have really interesting news bulletins the B.B.C. must be allowed to develop its own news service. Just as observers go out to see what has happened after a battle in the Near East, or to describe a fight in the air, so regular news men would have to tour the provinces for the B.B.C. and tell us what is happening. The effect on the provincial towns, which often feel neglected in the news, would be magical.

* * *

From the roof of this office one looks across at what is left of the Royal College of Surgeons. The Nazi bombers have done their job so thoroughly that it almost seems that they wanted to destroy the evidence that men were descended from apes. But rows upon rows of gaping skulls tracing the ascent of Man from the brutes look down sardonically on the evidence of Man's fulfilment. Buried in the ruins are specimens from which Darwin traced his origins and the collections assembled by Sir Arthur Keith, as curator of the Museum, in which he followed up the evidence from the skeletons and skulls, have been shattered. Two hundred years of patient collection—starting from the first collection by John Hunter, father of modern surgery—and thousands of years of Man's history are in the ruins. Even the rarest of John Hunter's collection, which were in the sub-basement for safety, have suffered. The fate of the Royal College is a cynical comment on war. For not only was there here the proofs of Man's upward struggle, but it was the fount of information for doctors, surgeons and scientists of the whole world—including Germany—in their efforts to help humanity out of suffering. Even since the outbreak of war scientists from abroad—U.S., Australia and elsewhere—have risked the U-boats to check up on evidence which could be confirmed only at the R.C.S. Among the irreplaceable remains which have been lost are the skulls of Tasmanian and Australian primitives, which palaeontologists may never find again. That sort of thing is more important than the loss of historic curios like Captain Cook's kangaroo, the first gorilla brought to Europe, a 2,900 year-old mummy or even the skeleton of Richard Coeur de Lion's consort. And who cares about the survival of the Irish giant—7 ft. 8½ ins.—or even the Sicilian dwarf—19 ins.? I saw one of the curators pick up a charred and shattered skull and gaze upon it like Hamlet upon Yorick—The Ascent of Man—*Per Ardua ad Astra.* CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to G. H. Milsted.
All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Where it's grand to be alive. Grand to dance to Harry Evans and his Band. Grand to play Tennis or Squash with Charles Reade (late of Queen's Club) to coach or extend you. Grand to be sure of a rubber of Bridge or a hundred up in the Billiard Room. Grand to have a Chef who can make one feel a Lord in the Woolton way. Grand to sleep, to sit, and to sun with nothing to worry about. A grand place to spend your leave—or your lifetime. —Advt. in the *Times.*

The Duke of Hamilton . . . succeeded to the title last year, when his father died at the age of 78. . . . He is the only Peer who has broken his nose five times.—*Daily Herald.*

Only the thin tight line of Hess's mouth betrayed the fact that he was a Nazi like the rest of them.—*Daily Express.*

It is conceivable that some devout element in Hess's character has gradually asserted itself, opening his eyes to the fundamental wickedness of the Nazi ambitions with which he has been so long associated. Such cases of swift conversion are not rare in history. Buddha turned from a life of royal luxury to found a great religion, St. Francis d'Assisi was a loose-living reveller until he suddenly became one of the most saintly figures of all time.—G. Ward Price in *Daily Mail.*

FORCED LANDING

O Hess has come down like a bolt from the blue,
And nobody sent him and nobody knew,
By no one commissioned by no one enticed,
(It takes one for landing but two for a tryst)
He had only a map and a name and address,
There was never a fluke like the coming of Hess.

So timely he crashed near to Dungavel Hall,
Where no one expected his coming at all,
His letters unanswered, unguessed his design,
All the Scots that he knew were the words auld lang syne,
But his landing occasioned old friends no distress—
None were ever acquainted with vice-fuehrer Hess.

So costly his clothing, his manners so nice,
He had plainly no truck with a regime of vice,
News Bulletins blushed to allude to his crimes,
He was washed white as snow in the ink of the *Times,*
His horror of bloodshed words could not express—
No ace was the equal of gentleman Hess.

We are armed against Nazi assaults from the air,
For peace-flights of Nazis we now must prepare,
We know what we hear but none say what they know,
And luckier envoys may still come and go,
But even appeasers are bound to confess
There was never a flop like the peace-flight of Hess. SAGITTARIUS

ON BEING A RUBBERNECK

THERE have been many complaints lately of the behaviour of people who, after a heavy air-raid, crowd to the districts where the havoc has been worst and gape at the charred skeletons of buildings like spectators at a show. They have been called harsh names, some of them not to be found in the dictionary, and denounced as public enemies who impede the work of the police and the firemen. Some of them, we are told, are ghouls who take taxis to the neighbourhood of the worst disasters—disasters not only to brick and stone but to human life.

I can understand how irritating the presence of these people must be to the overworked policemen and firemen doing their best to get on with their job; but I wonder whether the sightseers deserve all the denunciation they get. Man is a curious animal, and his curiosity is not necessarily vicious. When great, even tragic, events happen, he wants the testimony of his eyes to make them real to them. He is a sort of Thomas Didymus for whom seeing is believing. Even in peacetime he will run with the crowd to the scene of a great fire and will have to be kept back by the police at a safe distance from falling masonry. For man will take considerable risks to gratify his curiosity. He will make for the scene of a potential riot, though he knows, if he has any sense, that, when once a riot breaks out, the truncheons of the police cannot easily distinguish between rioters and sightseers. In the early days of the air-raids, strong public appeals had to be made to him not to gaze up at the sky, but to take shelter, when hostile aeroplanes were approaching. He went out into the streets to look at the Zeppelins in the searchlights overhead during the last war. During the present war, if you see a space roped off and a notice exhibited "Dangerous—Unexploded Bomb," you will usually see man, curious man, right up against the rope, searching hopefully with his eyes for the unexploded bomb. I am sure that, if it were announced that a rattlesnake was wandering loose on Hampstead Heath, man would jump on to a bus and make for the Heath so as to get as close a view of the rattlesnake as possible.

Not that all men are of this heroic build. Some men have common sense, and others, like me, are merely timid. But even we know what it is to experience the longings of a sightseer. I wonder whether, if there were still public executions at Tyburn, most of us could stay away from them. I remember hearing the question raised one evening when Arnold Bennett was present, and how, when one member of the company expressed his loathing of the notion of looking on at such a spectacle, Bennett said: "I think I should go—once: I should think it my duty as a writer to go—once." I said that I thought I should also go once, though, pondering the matter at leisure, I doubt whether I should have the nerve to do so when it came to the point. Perhaps, however, there is a morbid streak in most of us that makes us hate to miss seeing things that other people are seeing even if those things will make us shake with horror. On the other hand, most of the people who went to see the executions at Tyburn seem to have

looked on without any sense of horror at all. Probably they thought of it mainly as a free show—a piece of sensational drama. The popularity of Grand Guignol plays in the present century suggests that even now there are many people, not all belonging to the mob and not all sadists, who extract a particular pleasure from horror.

In various countries it seems to be agreed that human beings must be protected from the temptation to indulge the more morbid of their tastes. In the same century in which Englishmen ceased to be allowed to see one of their own kind hanged, they were also forbidden to see game-cocks killing each other in the cockpit. I have heard it said that cockfighting was prohibited, not because it involved cruelty to the cocks, but because of the blackguardly and unruly crowds that it drew. Certainly many good men saw nothing cruel in cockfighting. Charles James Fox was not a monster, and he was devoted to the sport. It may be argued that the spectators at cockfights were unconsciously sadists, but I doubt whether this is true of all of them. I fancy that it was the courage of the cocks—that and the gambling interest—that made the sport so popular. Most blood sports appeal to the love of courage among other things: that is what gives them their attraction for many charming people. If fox-hunting involved no risks, what a contemptible business it would be! If bull-fighting were not dangerous, I doubt whether it would ever have become the national sport of Spain. There are two blood sports that can be enjoyed without risk by those who are interested in them—shooting pigeons released from traps, as it is practised at Monte Carlo, and coursing—and I should be inclined to vote for the suppression of both. Coursing, no doubt, is exhilarating as an exhibition of grace and speed, but this can be had at a horse-race. And as for shooting trapped pigeons, it seems to me to be a game for insensitive morons.

Yet there are none of these sports that I would refuse to go and see—once. It was only by accident that I saw the pigeon-shooting at Monte Carlo as I was walking along the front one morning, but I was glad I had seen it. I should not otherwise have realised how despicable a pastime it was for mortals with souls said on high authority to be immortal. To see a bird released from the darkness of the trap and, dazzled by daylight, settling on the trap and looking round it, while balls were bowled at it till it rose into the air to be shot at, made one wonder how any man with a tint of imagination could take pleasure in it. There is a mean kind of pitilessness about shooting these tame birds beyond anything I could have imagined. It is the only sport that I have ever seen for which I could not with the aid of cogitation and casuistry find some excuse. Even all-in wrestling, if one were sure that the ordinary exhibition of all-in wrestling was genuine, would have something to be said for it. On the only occasion on which I saw all-in wrestling, however, I was convinced that every turn was a fake; and I should have been glad to see it suppressed, as it served merely to appeal to a morbid love of brutality on the part of the audience.

Still, I should regret to have missed seeing it. One usually regrets not having seen things that other people have seen. I am sorry, for example, never to have seen a bull-fight. I intended to go to see one when I was in Spain, but, on the only Sunday on which I was free, there was, a Spaniard told me, no bull-fight worth seeing. It seems odd that we who believe that bull-fighting ought to be suppressed should want to see it before it is suppressed. If bull-fighting is wrong, it must surely be wrong to go and see it. Yet so paradoxical is our make-up that we can regard a thing as wrong and yet long to see it. I remember meeting a bookmaker's clerk, in a Dublin public-house, who invited a friend of mine to go and see a cock-fight on the following Sunday. "I don't approve of it, mind you," he said, clearing his conscience; "but, when it's going on anyway, I like to see it." Many of us are like that. I hate the notion of cock-fighting, but if I were invited to a cock-fight, secure from police-raids, should I be able to resist the temptation to see so historic a sport—once? Perhaps. Perhaps not.

In Victorian times children were frequently told not to be inquisitive—fortunately with little effect. My English professor maintained that this Victorian prohibition was monstrous, and that a child should be encouraged to be as inquisitive as possible. Inquisitiveness, of course, unlike such things as simony and barratry, is both a vice and a virtue. The vicious aspect of it is embodied in those legendary figures, Peeping Tom, Paul Pry, and, perhaps, Nosey Parker. (Why is it, by the way, that the bad side of inquisitiveness is so closely associated with the letter "P"?) As for the good side of inquisitiveness, it is what has given the human race its great explorers and men of science. Psychologists (whose name, be it noted, begins with a "P," though, as in Psmith, the "P" is silent) probably represent a mixture of the good and the bad sorts of inquisitiveness.

I sometimes wonder whether my own inquisitiveness on certain occasions as a small boy was to be condemned or commended. When I was staying on a farm, I always wanted to see everything that was to be seen. There was nothing that happened on the farm of which I did not wish to be a spectator. I watched chickens being killed, not because I liked chickens to be killed, but because I liked watching. I sat up in the byre more than once into the small hours to see a cow giving birth to a calf. I rose before six in the morning to see horrid operations on calves and lambs. You may say this was the result of morbid curiosity, and that is a possible explanation. I think, however, that it was the result of the same curiosity that made me like to see calves being fed, corn being cut, horses being shod, or bees swarming. All these things, whether involving pain or not, were parts of the normal life of the farm, and I should have felt out of it if I had not been allowed to see every one of them.

And if I was morbid, I suffered for it. The crueller—if the word "cruel" is applicable—aspects of farm life often gave me nightmares, in which I dreamed that the horses had become masters of the human race and kept us as domestic animals, treating us as we treat all the present domestic animals. They killed us like chickens, for example, and roasted and boiled us for their dinner, sitting round a table on their tails as they ate us. And one curious feature of the dream was that, when our bones were picked, we were always miraculously restored to life and fattened again and again for the table through a long series of existences. If ever curiosity, morbid or otherwise, was fully paid for, mine was.

Having been so inquisitive myself, I cannot feel censorious of the inquisitive element among the people of London. If they are a nuisance, they must, of course, be kept away from the bombed areas—though how this can be effectively done without hampering people who have business in the bombed areas, I do not know—but I am sure that the curiosity of most of them is both natural and innocent. To see a thing with one's own eyes—especially a thing that will be remembered in history for centuries—is an enlargement of experience, and it is not in itself an illegitimate enlargement of experience. There is much, indeed, to be said for the rubberneck. Bacon and Darwin were rubbernecks; and so are most other people, including the people who condemn them.

Y. Y.

GERTLER

THE Leicester Galleries are to be congratulated on having assembled, in spite of difficulties, a representative collection of Gertler's paintings. The exhibition is impressive and a little surprising; for now that we have a chance of studying his development from beginning to end we become aware of chops and changes, provoked, no doubt, by preoccupations and inquietudes, which do not seem to accord easily with the character of the artist whom we thought we knew. Gertler was to the marrow a Jew, urban, of the Ghetto almost. That he had been born with talent must have been clear to anyone who knew anything about painting; and so clear was it that by 1908, before the boy was seventeen, he had been sent, with the help of the Jewish Aid Society, to the Slade. Consider the work of these early years in which the influence of his surroundings is positively oppressive. The portrait of his mother (1911) is a revelation of precocious mastery; while *The Artist's Family: A Playful Scene*, painted in the same year, is even more revealing. About this time, if I remember rightly, the teachers at the Slade were enthusiastic—if that is not too strong a word—over our nineteenth-century anecdotists—Wilkie, Leslie and, for all I know, Egg; and their enthusiasm, or partiality, was doubtless the prime motive of this absurd but lively composition. How envious must they have been of their pupil who could establish with unerring address, in three dimensions, a ridiculous yet telling row of vulgarly expressive figures. Were they equally appreciative, I wonder, of the painterlike qualities in the old lady's head and in the still life beyond? By 1913, when he drew *Head of a Woman*, No. 4 in this exhibition, they probably felt that at last they had got the audacious young fellow in hand; for the drawing is conventionally accomplished and glows with a borrowed beauty—a beauty borrowed from Michelangelo by way of Augustus John. Little or nothing of Gertler is to be seen. But the very next year he was drawing *Man and Woman in Kitchen* (No. 1), in which there is almost too much Gertler, and certainly nothing of Michelangelo.

From earliest days there was in the painting of Gertler, and of other Slade students, some faint echo of what was going on in France. Even before the Post-Impressionist exhibitions there were unintelligent references to a misunderstood Gauguin or to Maurice Denis; there

were Breton peasants, or something like them. This exoticism, I surmise, was brought to London by Henry Lamb, who went early to Paris and had the wit to catch a glimpse of what was happening there. But after 1914 the art of Gertler, like that of all the abler young or youngish painters, was dominated by the revelations of the two Post-Impressionist exhibitions—the capital event in the history of modern British painting. *The Merry-go-round*, *The Pond*, *The Dutch Doll*, *The Windmill*, represent this period. And then something happened, I know not what, and Gertler decided to be beautiful.

All works of art that succeed are beautiful. But on this point there is always a possibility of misunderstanding, which crops up from time to time. In Gertler's case it appears to have cropped up about 1920. I dare say people told him that his pictures were ugly—that, I think, is pretty much what the *Times* said only the other day about *The Merry-go-round*. By this they may have meant what I suppose people meant when they used to say that Raphael was beautiful and Rembrandt was not—that, translated back into life, a Madonna by Raphael would be a pleasing young person, and a Rabbi by Rembrandt a nasty old Jew. But the beauty of a work of art is in the work and nowhere else; a picture is beautiful, not because it is like something beautiful, but in itself. Gertler, seemingly, was perturbed by the crude comments of people who could not understand this, and set himself to recall by imitation natural beauties, thus producing, in the year 1920, *Reclining Nude* and *The Artist Painting*, the two worst pictures in the show. The last manifestation, so far as one can tell, of this unfortunate preoccupation with what "they" call "beauty" was *The Straw Hat*, painted in 1922. This is a picture attractive enough in its cheap, or cheapened, way; but it is not in Gertler's way. It is not what he meant; and the great virtue of Gertler's art is that he does mean it, and means it with all his might.

The more intelligent of those who complained that his pictures were ugly were criticising, no doubt, the quality of the paint—the texture. This, though on occasions lovely, can be downright disagreeable. Gertler was always willing—too willing some may think—to sacrifice beauty of texture in the hope of achieving a rarer and subtler beauty, a beauty of relations, an interior harmony, or, if you like, intensity. I can imagine a censor of the imbecile class standing before No. 30, ignoring the fact that the flowers are stated to be artificial, and snarling, "Flowers are beautiful; why make these hideous copies of them?" And I can imagine the sophisticated amateur complaining, "Why sacrifice the beauty of paint to the beauty of painting?" The intensity of the vision, the energy of rendering, and the half-hidden splendour of the treatment are, in my opinion, sufficient answer.

Two pictures may be compared profitably, *The Bust* (No. 35) and *Still Life* (No. 42). One or other is doubtless the most important in the show; both belong to the final period. *The Bust*, painted in 1936, is a large, impressive and moving composition executed with unwonted freedom. There is a spontaneity about the whole thing which surprises and delights the amateur inured to the painful and elaborate planning on which in and out of season Gertler was apt to insist. The picture is lyrical almost, with a charm that takes the eye from the first glance. Into the big *Still Life* you have to poke your nose to get its full flavour. It is a more intellectual, a more scientifically organised, work. The handling is sensitive for all that, and it is, I suspect, Gertler's masterpiece. It would not have been his last word. During the two or three final years he had so enriched his experience and strengthened his gift of expression that he had it in his power to achieve things beyond any he had yet conceived. With his alert and questioning mind, naturally he was an experimenter. He would perform exercises in the manner of some master who had caught his imagination, chewing as much as he could bite off, but swallowing only what he could assimilate. From the very last picture of his that I have seen—unluckily it has not been hung—it is clear that he had been looking at the Picassos, *chez* Rosenberg, and intended to get something out of them—probably a new mode of construction. In his technique, too, he constantly made changes and improvements; and painters, at any rate, will see what I mean when I say that, if the Post-Impressionist exhibitions were the great liberating event in his life, the next most important was the discovery of the palette knife.

Gertler's death, in 1939, just when he seemed to be coming into his own, was a tragedy. Since then we have supped so full with horrors that the word may sound too big, one that should be reserved for the overthrow of States and ruin of great cities; but the extinction of an artist before he has given what he and he alone could give is tragic; it is a loss to civilisation that can never be repaired. Only the other day we read in the papers of the death on active service of Frank Coombs. Here was another painter of promise who, like Gertler, had been obliged to overcome material difficulties in order to follow his bent. Less fortunate than Gertler, he never became wholly free; but still had to earn by other means the money that bought time in which to paint. Consequently his development was slow, and probably he would never have gone so far as Gertler. His talent, however, was unmistakable. In particular, he had a gift for extracting from architecture just those qualities that mean most to painters. He grasped them ingeniously, and rendered them with a grave and charming delight. I am glad to think that some time ago, in this paper, I called attention to these gifts; but it is a dismal world in which one catches at such scraps of comfort.

CLIVE BELL

THE VOICE

A MESSAGE came from the rescue party who straightened up and leaned on their spades in the rubble. The policeman said to the crowd: "Everyone keep quiet for five minutes. No talking, please. They're trying to hear where he is."

The silent crowd raised their faces and looked across the ropes to the church which, now it was destroyed, broke the line of the street like a decayed tooth. The bomb had brought down the front wall and the roof, the balcony had capsized. Freakishly untouched, the hymn board still announced the previous Sunday's hymns.

A small wind blew a smell of smouldering cloth across people's noses from another street where there was another scene like this. A bus roared by and heads turned in passive anger until the sound of the engine had gone. People blinked as a pigeon flew from a roof and crossed the building like an omen of release. There was dead quietness again. Presently a murmuring sound was heard by the rescue party. The man buried under the débris was singing again.

At first difficult to hear, soon a tune became definite. Two of the rescuers took up their shovels and shouted down to encourage the buried man, and the voice became stronger and louder. Words became clear. The leader of the rescue party held back the others and those who were near strained to hear. Then the words were unmistakable:

> "Oh Thou whose Voice the waters heard
> And hushed their raging at Thy Word."

The buried man was singing a hymn.

A clergyman was standing with the warden in the middle of the ruined church.

"That's Mr. Morgan all right," the warden said. "He could sing. He got silver medals for it."

The Rev. Frank Lewis frowned.

"Gold, I shouldn't wonder," said Mr. Lewis, dryly. Now he knew Morgan was alive he said: "What the devil's he doing in there? How did he get in? I locked up at eight o'clock last night myself."

Lewis was a wiry middle-aged man, but the white dust on his hair and his eye-lashes, and the way he kept licking the dust off his dry lips, moving his jaws all the time, gave him the monkeyish, testy and suspicious air of an old man. He had been up all night on rescue work in the raid and he was tired out. The last straw was to find the church had gone and that Morgan, the so-called Rev. Morgan, was buried under it.

The rescue workers were digging again. There was a wide hole now and a man was down in it filling a basket with his hands. The dust rose like smoke from the hole as he worked.

The voice had not stopped singing. It went on, rich, virile, masculine, from verse to verse of the hymn. Shooting up like a stem through the rubbish the voice seemed to rise and branch out powerfully, luxuriantly, and even theatrically like a tree until everything was in its shade. It was a shade that came towards one like dark arms.

"All the Welsh can sing," the warden said. Then he remembered that Lewis was Welsh also. "Not that I've got anything against the Welsh," the warden said.

"The scandal of it," Lewis was thinking. "Must he sing so loud, must he advertise himself? I locked up myself last night. How the devil did he get in?" What he meant was: "How did the devil get in."

For to Lewis, Morgan was the nearest human thing to the devil. He could never pass that purple gowned figure, sauntering like a cardinal in his skull cap on the sunny side of the street, without a shudder of distaste and derision. An unfrocked priest, his predecessor in the church, Morgan ought in strict justice to have been in prison, and would have been but for the indulgence of the bishop. But this did not prevent the old man with the saintly white head and the eyes

half-closed by the worldly juices of food and wine, from walking about dressed in his vestments, like an actor walking in the sun of his own vanity, a hook-nosed satyr, a he-goat significant to servant girls, the crony of the public-house, the chaser of bookmakers, the smoker of cigars. It was terrible, but it was just that the bomb had buried him; but only the malice of the Evil One would have thought of bringing the punishment of the sinner upon the Church as well. And now, from the ruins, the voice of the wicked man rose up in all the elaborate pride of art and evil.

Suddenly there was a moan from the sloping timber, slates began to skate down.

"Get out. It's going," shouted the warden.

The man who was digging struggled out of the hole as it bulged under the landslide. There was a dull crumble, the crashing and splitting of wood and then the sound of brick and dust tearing down below like water. Thick dust clouded over and choked them all. The rubble rocked like a cake walk. Everyone rushed back and looked behind at the wreckage as if it were still alive. It remained still. They all stood there, frightened and suspicious. Presently one of the men with the shovel said: "The bloke's shut up."

Everyone stared stupidly. It was true. The man had stopped singing. The clergyman was the first to move. Gingerly he went to what was left of the hole and got down on his knees.

"Morgan!" he said, in a low voice.

Then he called out more loudly:

"Morgan!"

Getting no reply, Lewis began to scramble the rubble away with his hands.

"Morgan!" he shouted. "Can you hear?" He snatched a shovel from one of the men and began digging and shovelling the stuff away. He had stopped chewing and muttering. His expression had entirely changed. "Morgan!" he called. He dug for two feet and no one stopped him. They looked with bewilderment at the sudden frenzy of the small man grubbing like a monkey, spitting out the dust, filing down his nails. They saw the spade at last shoot through the old hole. He was down the hole widening it at once, letting himself down as he worked. He disappeared under a ledge made by the fallen timber.

The party above could do nothing. "Morgan," they heard him call. "It's Lewis. We're coming. Can you hear?" He shouted for an axe and presently they heard him smashing with it. He was scratching like a dog or a rabbit.

A voice like that to have stopped, to have gone! Lewis was thinking. How unbearable this silence was. A beautiful proud voice, the voice of a man, a voice like a tree, the soul of a man spreading in the air like the cedars of Lebanon. "Only one man I have heard with a bass like that, Owen the Bank, at Newtown before the war. Morgan!" he shouted. "Sing! God will forgive you everything, only sing. Pray God he's alive."

One of the rescue party following behind the clergyman in the tunnel shouted back to his mates.

"I can't do nothing. This bleeder's blocking the gangway."

Half an hour Lewis worked in the tunnel. Then an extraordinary thing happened to him. The tunnel grew damp and its floor went as soft as clay to the touch. Suddenly his knees went through. There was a gap with a yard of cloth, the vestry curtain or the carpet at the communion rail was unwound and hanging through it. Lewis found himself looking down into the blackness of the crypt. He lay down and put his head and shoulders through the hole and felt about him until he found something solid again. The beams of the floor were tilted down into the crypt.

"Morgan. Are you there, man?" he called.

He listened to the echo of his voice. He was reminded of the time he had talked into a cistern when he was a boy. Then his heart jumped. A voice answered him out of the darkness from under the fallen floor. It was like the voice of a man lying comfortably and waking up from a snooze, a voice thick and sleepy.

"Who's that?" asked the voice.

"Morgan, man. It's Lewis. Are you hurt?" Tears pricked the dust in Lewis's eyes and his throat ached with anxiety as he spoke. Forgiveness and love were flowing out of him. From below the deep thick voice of Morgan came back, not at once, but after a maddening delay:

"You've been a hell of a long time," it said. "I've damn near finished my whisky."

* * *

"Hell" was the word which changed Mr. Lewis's mind. Hell was a real thing, a real place for him. He believed in it. When he read out the word "Hell" in the Scriptures he could see the flames rising as they rise out of the furnaces at Swansea. "Hell" was a professional and poetic word for Mr. Lewis. A man who had been turned out of the church had no right to use it. Strong language and strong drink, Mr. Lewis hated both of them. The idea of whisky being in his church made his soul rise like an angered stomach. There was Morgan, insolent and comfortable, lying (so he said) under the old altar table which was propping up the fallen floor, drinking a bottle of whisky.

"How did you get in?" Lewis said, sharply, from the hole. "Were you in the church last night when I locked up?"

The old man sounded not as bold as he had been. He even sounded shifty when he replied. "I've got my key."

"*Your* key. I have the only key of the church. Where did you get a key?"

"My old key. I always had a key."

The man in the tunnel behind the clergyman crawled back up the tunnel to the daylight.

"O.K.," the man said. "He's got him. They're having a ruddy row."

"Reminds me of ferreting. I used to go ferreting with my old dad," said the policeman, lighting a cigarette.

"You should have given that key up," said Mr. Lewis.

"Have you been in here before?" asked Mr. Lewis.

"Yes, but I shan't come here again," said the old man.

There was the dribble of powdered rubble, pouring down like sand in an hour-glass, the ticking of the strained timber like the loud ticking of a clock.

Mr. Lewis felt that at last after years he was face to face with the devil and the devil was trapped and caught. The tick-tock of the wood went on.

"Men have been risking their lives, working and digging for hours because of this," said Lewis. "I've ruined a suit of . . ."

The tick-tock had grown louder in the middle of the words. There was a sudden lurching and groaning of the floor, followed by a big heaving and splitting sound.

"It's going," said Morgan with detachment from below. "The table leg." The floor crashed down. The hole in the tunnel was torn wide and Lewis grabbed at the darkness until he caught a board. It swung him out and in a second he found himself hanging by both hands over the pit.

"I'm falling. Help me," shouted Lewis in terror. "Help me."

There was no answer.

"Oh, God," shouted Lewis, kicking for a foothold. "Morgan, are you there? Catch me. I'm going."

Then a groan like a snore came out of Lewis. He could hold no longer. He fell. He fell exactly two feet.

The sweat ran down his legs and caked on his face. He was as wet as a rat. He was on his hands and knees gasping. When he got his breath again he was afraid to raise his voice.

"Morgan," he said quietly, panting.

"Only one leg went," the old man said in a quiet, grating voice. "The other three are all right."

Lewis lay panting on the floor. There was a long silence. "Haven't you ever been afraid before, Lewis?" Morgan said. Lewis had no breath to reply. "Haven't you ever felt rotten with fear," said the old man, calmly, "like an old tree, infested and worm-eaten with it, soft as a rotten orange?"

"You were a fool to come down here after me. I wouldn't have done the same for you," Morgan said.

"You would," Lewis managed to say.

"I wouldn't," said the old man. "I'm afraid. I'm an old man, Lewis, and I can't stand it. I've been down here every night since the raids got bad."

Lewis listened to the voice. It was low with shame, it had the roughness of the earth, the kicked and trodden choking dust of Adam. The shame of Mr. Lewis listened for the first time to the shame of Morgan. Coarsened and sordid and unlike the singing voice, the voice of Morgan was also gentle and fragmentary.

Sensations of abasement and triumph, too confusing to express in words, came into Lewis's heart.

"When you stop feeling shaky," Morgan said, "you'd better sing. I'll do a bar, but I can't do much. The whisky's gone. Sing, Lewis. Even if they don't hear, it does you good. Take the tenor, Lewis."

Above in the daylight the look of pain went from the mouths of the rescue party, a grin came on the dusty lips of the warden.

"Hear it?" he said. "A ruddy Welsh choir!"

V. S. PRITCHETT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"This England," at the Regal

Not the sort of *This England* that will be found on another page in this journal. The film at the Regal, a what-we-are-fighting-for affair, starts with an air raid on an English village. After the raid three people are standing at a window looking over the downland; one of them (an American) says, "I feel I have been here before." They all feel it. Back they go. First we have glimpses of British serfs defying death and a Norman tyrant; then, in Tudor times, there is drilling on the green, the Armada is sighted and sunk; then, aristocrats gamble and pedlars gape, while Boney threatens; and to end up with, there is Armistice night, with a blind V.C. making a speech in the village pub, before we come back to the three at a window and a coda of Unity. Each episode tells a bit of story in a very storied way. *This England* isn't impressive; in fact, it is the sort of patriotic film we do worst. Mr. Emlyn Williams, besides giving a powerful performance as a sinister and slightly phoney Hodge through the ages, also wrote the dialogue. Infinitely more effective, both in technique and in its message of a "sceptred isle," was the recent "short" of Mr. Leslie Howard taking three Dominion soldiers to the top of the Monument; there history and Shakespeare merged appealingly with the view.

The Sadler's Wells Ballet at the New Theatre

How comely it is and how reviving to have again in beleaguered London the beauty of movement, colour and sound brought to us by the Ballet. True, one misses the orchestra, but the two brilliant pianists make more effective vicars than one could reasonably have hoped, and our gratitude shall go in the first place to them. The dancers are in magnificent form, and despite the ardours of a provincial tour they have prepared a new ballet by Miss Ninette de Valois, which is promised for next Wednesday. Meanwhile we have been able to reconsider and enjoy the usual repertory. One still feels that in *The Wanderer* the highly imaginative choreography and decor, so congruous with one another, are uncomfortably matched, both in purpose and in technique, with the music. Yet this ballet is one that we see repeated with deep pleasure, because of its mysteriousness.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, May 23rd—
Prof. E. G. R. Taylor: "Geographical Aspects of National Planning," Birkbeck College, 1.15; and on May 30th and June 6th.

SATURDAY, May 24—
Ethical Union: "Social Morality of the Post-War Order," Conway Hall, 3.

SUNDAY, May 25th—
K. B. Smellie: "Social Philosophy—the Nature of the State," 17 Manchester Street, 11.
Toynbee Hall Concert, James Whitehead, Norman Tucker, May Bartlett, 3.30.

MONDAY, May 26th—
Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch, Dr. Harold Moody: "Education in Africa," 12 Gt. Newport Street, 1.

TUESDAY, May 27th—
Eugenics Society Luncheon, Dr. N. A. B. Wilson: "Are Talents Hereditary?" Pinoli's, 1. Tickets 3s. 6d.
Emile Burns: "Where the War is Leading," 153 Finchley Road, 7.30.

WEDNESDAY, May 28th—
Federal Union Foreign Committee Lunch, Sir William Beveridge, Prof. Arthur Newell, R. W. G. Mackay, 6 Stanhope Gate, W.1, 1. Tickets 5s. 6d., from SPE 0368 or MAY 0631.

THURSDAY, May 29th—
Cecil Farthing: "Early Georgian London, 1714-1760," Courtauld Institute, 1.15.
Operatic Programme by members of Glyndebourne Opera, Austrian Centre, 7.30.

Correspondence

UNDER WHAT FLAG?

SIR,—Recently the Press has announced that Foreign Courts of Law are to be set up in this country in order, *inter alia*, to compel foreign nationals to join the armies of their Governments now established on British soil. May I recall in this connection the recent case of a Polish Jew who, at the instance of the Polish Military Authorities, was arrested and handed over to the Poles? Thanks to the intervention of Mr. Silverman, M.P., this man was released. But what will happen to him when, by order of the new Courts, the Polish Army conscripts him?

The whole question of refugees who sought asylum in this country is involved. We fled from Nazi oppression to the protection of British Democracy. If Great Britain wants our help in this mortal struggle, we are prepared to give it readily, be it in factories, on the land, or in the British army. But most of us are *political* refugees. We want to defend Democracy, but why should we be compelled to swear allegiance to people whom we do not trust, many of whom are the very men who led our countries into disaster? The majority of us are Socialists; the Governments set up in this country, and set up in an absolutely undemocratic manner, are composed mostly of people who always have been the opponents of Socialism. My own country, Czechoslovakia, never had such a Right Wing government as that now established here. I agree: we must fight against Hitler. But why serve under men who were Hitler's ministers in the "Protectorate"? Why under men who after Munich wanted to testify against Dr. Benes?

Several hundred men from the Czechoslovak forces in France refused to serve in the reconstituted Czech Army in this country. They were first interned, then set free. What will be their fate, if they have to rejoin? And what of the Sudeten-Germans? They have Czechoslovak passports. But is it just to compel them to join an army in which men have been beaten up for speaking German?

For many thousands of us refugees this new law, if it should come into effect, will create a most painful dilemma. We Czechs have been receiving more and more threatening letters calling on us to "volunteer" into the Czech Army. I myself have received three, the last one threatening me with a fine of 30,000 Czech Crowns or two years of prison for non-compliance. I disagree with the composition of the Czechoslovak Government, as do the majority of the Czechs in this country. What will happen to me, if they get me in their hands as a conscript soldier? I repeat, for myself as for thousands of others, that we are prepared to do for Britain all that Britain asks of us. Only Britain should not ask us to lend our lives in order to back men who have never been elected by their peoples, who stand for no cause but their own self-interest, and whose return to power in their own countries would mean that we Socialists would be exiles for ever. A CZECH SOCIALIST.

London.

POLITICAL PRISONERS IN INDIA

SIR,—Observing that I "cannot be aware" that Nehru's speech (November 3, 1940) was "widely circulated by the Congress organisation in this country, which is as efficient in its propaganda here and in America as our own Ministry of Information is contemptible," Sir Alfred Watson hammers home my point that only the people of Britain were not allowed to know what was done in their name. That speech was ignored by the press and the channels controlled by Government. It seeped out later, through the post, to those already deeply interested; and in the United States was, and is, featured with a fullness that does our cause tremendous damage.

Sir Alfred, accusing me of misrepresentation, says that "in addition to various special facilities, denied to the ordinary prisoner," Nehru "is permitted both to write and receive letters." Let your readers judge. I quote from letters just received. "On previous occasions he was allowed to send some personal letters apart from the fortnightly one and also deal with business letters. I had a letter from him yesterday" (January 27: letters now take much time from India) "in which he informs me that all these have been stopped, so he has asked me to reply to all the letters he has received from his friends. He had written to you in his letter (which was never sent)"—a passage follows about his Sanskrit reading. Nehru's sister, Mrs. Pandit, and no doubt the rest of our jailed ex-Ministers, are under the same rule. "She is not entitled either to write or to receive any letters, having given up her right to receive and write a fortnightly letter in order to have a weekly interview instead of a fortnightly one. But I was allowed to show her your letter at my interview." Sir Alfred should cross-question his sources. Perhaps a question in the Commons might clear up the matter.

Every apologist, while stressing the Congress demand for "independence" (Sir Alfred's quotemarks), suppresses the fact that the Muslim League also, and equally, demands it. Is this ignorance? Or misrepresentation? Two last points. Attendant details (for example, cruelty) can deepen a deed's infamy, but do not change its ethical quality. If what we have done in India is not wrong, then nothing is wrong. Nehru steadily voiced India's distrust of our appeasement policy all over the world and warned us that a war was coming, into which we had no right to push India as our tool. When war came he said plainly that if it was really war for democracy India would gladly join us. Why does Sir Alfred assume it as self-evident that, when India's opinion and emotion were brushed aside, it was Nehru's moral duty to lead his countrymen to take up their strictly subordinate share of providing a reservoir of man-power and munitions? It is self-evident to no one outside this island.

After the Nazis seized Prague Mr. Churchill said (April 20, 1939), "There never has been in England such a one-man Government." That Government brought us to extreme peril. Why should its fruits be different in India? There have sometimes been Viceroy's Councils which approached Cabinet status, but not the present one. Sir Alfred knows enough about India to know this, and to know that it is part-reason why no Indian who matters, Congress or Muslim or Moderate, will enter that Council.

The question is sidetracked by those who insist on acceptance of Congress (or Muslim League) demands at their full face-statement and by those who think this a time to score debating points. If the war ends with this matter unchanged, no Indian group will forgive us (except the Princes). I believe that most people who are concerned with our war chances now hold pretty much what I hold; there is more unity about India than our rulers realise. The Labour leaders may be hopeless; but I believe there are Conservatives who want to save the situation before too late and care about moral issues. We ought not, even now, to despair; it will be ruin if we do. As Bonar Law once said, "After all, we are a very great people."

Oxford. EDWARD THOMPSON

SIR,—I shall be glad if you will allow me to correct the misstatements of fact in Sir Alfred Watson's letter which appeared in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION on May 17th. Sir Alfred Watson says that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru "is permitted to write and receive letters in addition to various special facilities denied to ordinary prisoners." It is not surprising that Sir Alfred Watson should make this statement, for he has the authority of none other than the Secretary of State for India. Mr. Amery has stated in the House of Commons that Pandit Nehru has special quarters and special facilities given him in jail and suggested that he is something like a State prisoner.

In December Mr. Nehru was allowed a fortnightly interview and there were no restrictions on his correspondence. His mail was delivered without being opened. However, he kept strictly to the jail regulation for A class prisoners of writing only one letter a fortnight. By the end of December all this changed. Business letters alone were permitted and only after they were censored. Later this also was stopped, and Mr. Nehru was restricted to receiving one letter a fortnight.

In January a new Superintendent, notorious for his harshness towards Congress, was put in charge of the jail and restrictions increased. The barber and laundryman, hitherto allowed, were stopped. All parcels of books, hitherto allowed, were kept interminably in the office and subjected to five-fold

censorship, once by the C.I.D. and four times by the prison officials. Letters from Nehru, the fortnightly ones, were heavily censored and parts obliterated so that they made no sense for the person receiving them.

Similarly all business correspondence was stopped. Mr. Nehru then requested that the papers of the National Planning Committee, the work of which was nearing completion, might be allowed to reach him. After seven weeks' delay he was told that such permission would not be given. (The N.P.C. was set up three years ago by Congress under Mr. Nehru's chairmanship and is participated in by *all* the provincial governments.) Similarly he is not allowed to receive any papers connected with the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital Trust, of which he was chairman and therefore resigned that office.

The suggestion that Mr. Nehru is a specially treated prisoner is entirely untrue. According to the law of India he is not even a "political" prisoner, but just a common criminal undergoing rigorous imprisonment. . . .

A word may be said about the treatment of political prisoners in general in India. There are 5,000 Civil Disobedience prisoners in India, said Mr. Amery. I myself do not accept the official figures, but even 5,000 is a large number. We have received intimation that political prisoners and under-trials are being handcuffed and marched to the courts and taken on trains in handcuffs, that they are put in fetters and subjected to penal labour of gruesome kinds, often without any consideration for the physique of the person concerned.

In addition to these prisoners there are, officially admitted, 700 prisoners in concentration camps, of which 100 are Civil Disobedience prisoners and 480 Communists and "those who agree with them." They include students and working-class leaders. Most of them are untried. In a debate asking for a committee which would be able to see that they were fairly treated in jail camps, Sir Reginald Maxwell, the Home Member of the Government of India, branded these men as hirelings, traitors and "men who had plotted all their lives for the downfall of society." He was ferocious in his attack, which provoked the most moderate Mr. Joshi, who had moved for the committee, to declare that he was proud of these young men as any father should be and that they were some of the best in the land. When questioned whether these prisoners should not have at least as good treatment as the Nazis and Fascist prisoners in India, the Home Member replied that the Nazis were better people.

Sir Alfred Watson refers to the "efficient propaganda" of the Congress here and in America and bemoans the futility of the Ministry of Information's efforts. I will leave him and the Ministry to themselves. The latter does not really concern me, but one cannot help thinking that the Ministry is not doing a worse or more mischievous job than Sir Alfred Watson, whom I have heard on the platform, on behalf of the India Office!

Sir Alfred Watson is also in error about the Congress. It has no organisation in this country or in America, or indeed anywhere outside India. It subsidises no one and no group outside India. There are occasions and purposes when a person is authorised to speak on its behalf. I have had this privilege for some time, but the Congress neither directs nor controls any propaganda here. Sir Alfred Watson has referred to the publication in this country of Mr. Nehru's last statement from the dock. The India League was responsible for its release to the Press and for its publication as an appendix to a pamphlet of mine on Nehru entitled *Britain's Prisoner*. Only one paper in India, which was prepared to face the consequences, published the statement. We received it from there after some delay. In America it came out of an ordinary publishing house in an abridged edition of Nehru's *Autobiography*. The Congress had nothing to do with it. The Congress point of view obtains some support in this country and America, not because it is "efficiently" put across—the actual facts are to the contrary—but because it is an unanswerable case and there is, in spite of all the Imperialists, a small body of opinion in this country that does not set racial and national boundaries to freedom and justice! It may not suit Sir Alfred Watson or the India Office, but if this "propaganda" were more "efficient" and the people had the bare facts, the Indian "problem" would perhaps be nearer solution now.

V. K. KRISHNA MENON

The India League,
165 Strand, London, W.C.2.

SIR,—In saying that my letter "holds no settlement, but only exacerbation ending in triangular civil war between Congress, Muslim League and Government," Mr. Thompson has misunderstood me.

Naturally, I believe that a genuine settlement is possible, without civil war, but not on the basis of shifting around individuals in the Indian Government. Would an Indian Defence and Finance Minister, though eagerly anticipating Dominion Status (definitely dated) be able to remove the causes of the workers' and peasants' riots? The main result of this compromise would be to widen the existing split in the national movement, perhaps an outcome desired in some British circles.

A solution is only possible if we alter our class affiliations in India from the reactionaries to the rising forces of democracy; if, in fact, we start imprisoning the communal diehards instead of the elected representatives of the people. Such a policy would lead to encouragement instead of suppression of the peasant organisations, and would be the best method of training India for democracy. To talk only in terms of Constitutional alterations is to ignore the basic grievances in India: to quote Nehru—"the struggle for freedom is the natural result of economic conditions, and, so long as these conditions continue, they must find outlet in such a struggle." The communal problem will not be solved until a democratic Indian Government comes into power on a programme of far-reaching economic reforms; and are our present rulers working for such a Government in India? Clearly, they are not. It is their policy which is making for the civil war which Mr. Thompson fears.

A. J. ALEXANDER

Herstmonceux, Sussex.

THE STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL

SIR,—During the past few months I have watched with interest your gradual approach to a dilemma which is both real and inescapable. In your discussion of Sir Robert Vansittart's pamphlet, your argument with Mr. Voigt, and your general remarks on the fundamental issues of the war, you have been led to make or support a distinction between the German people, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, what has been variously described as the German system, the German machine, the German régime, but which, historically and accurately, is best called the German State. The distinction you have drawn so persistently is that between a living reality, a People, and an obsessive abstraction, the State.

It is the German State that is responsible for all the political fictions, the national ambitions, and the racial tyrannies of the German people. It is the German State and its instrument of power, the Germany Army, against which we are fighting. If we destroy the German State we rid Europe of a menace and liberate, not only ourselves and our allies from fear, but also the German people from their obsession.

I think you must agree that this is a fair representation of your point of view. But I wonder if you have fully considered the repercussions on our own internal policy? What is bad for the Germans—the State as the ruling concept of government—cannot be good for us. But Socialism in this country, and you as representing that movement of thought, have for long been committed to a collectivist solution of our political and economic problems—a solution which not only implies the concept of the State, but has actually derived that concept from German sources, notably from Karl Marx and his master Hegel (and do not let us be deceived by the claim that Marx "turned Hegel upside down"—for Hegelianism is like an hour-glass and periodical reversals of this kind are natural to it).

Well, Sir, what are you going to do about it? Are you going to be consistent and gradually eradicate the concept of the State from your own political philosophy? Are you prepared to retrace your steps to that melancholy day in 1872 when Marx defeated Bakunin and the Socialist movement committed itself henceforth to the authoritarian State, and begin again from that point?

Seventy years is not a long time in the history of a nation, and it may not yet be too late to return to a democratic faith based on the ideal of individual liberty. But if that is agreed, let us declare the fact, let us recognise it as a not inconsiderable outcome of the present impact of reality, and let us begin to remould our policies accordingly.

Perhaps one can assume that Mr. Cole's article in your last issue is a first step in that direction, for he not only calls for the stimulus of a great ideal embodying a changed attitude to life, but explicitly admits that such an ideal cannot be found in the collective State. May I repeat one sentence from his article? "It is a clear lesson of recent history that democracy cannot be real unless it rests on small groups as its basic units—a group small enough to be competently administered and led by men of normal stature and mental make-up." If we really have learned that "clear lesson" we are already back at the starting-point I have already mentioned: and knowing by bitter experience that we have been on the wrong road, we can now advance fearlessly on the right one.

HERBERT READ

Broom House, Seer Green,
Beaconsfield.

[In an age when technical change has vastly increased the power of the State, the problem of preserving the liberty of the individual or the small group becomes increasingly difficult and important. But it is not solved by talking about the abolition of the State.—ED., *N. S. & N.*]

"FULL CIRCLE"

SIR,—I am certainly not a Christian, but I do welcome the movement to bring British Socialism back to its original basis of justice, freedom and beauty. Socialism in this country was always based on a broad humanism, and never had its roots in the sterile pseudo-Marxian philosophy which unfortunately is regarded in so many quarters to-day as the pure word of the Gospel. Ever since the latter-day Marxians gained an influence over the movement Socialist propaganda has withered and died.

In the early days Socialist missionary effort swept like a great and vitalising revival throughout the country. Its propagandists were steeped in great idealist literature; they were inspired by William Morris's *News from Nowhere;* Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England;* Prince Kropotkin's noble *Appeal to the Young*, and by many obscure pamphlet writers who were appealing to the sense of human justice and fair play.

Anybody who lived through the great missionary days in Scotland, Yorkshire, Lancashire and South Wales can still experience a leap of exhilaration when they remember those stirring times. Even as late as the Clay Cross by-election, when the late Arthur Henderson returned to Parliament, I recall a hard-boiled politician standing enthralled in the market-place as a Socialist crowd sang John Addington Symond's fine poem, "These things shall be."

In those pioneer days the Socialist mass was moved by the singing of "Oh! beautiful my country"; Edward Carpenter's "England Arise"; Ebenezer Elliot's great hymn "When wilt thou save the people," and many other fine compositions which made an instinctive appeal to the elementary sense of justice and love. There was a network of Socialist Sunday schools where devoted teachers explained Socialism in the terms of one's duty to their neighbour.

From all this the Socialist movement sprung. Then came the craze for hard economic dogma; for speakers who talked in a jargon completely alien to the man in the street; for strict adherence to cast-iron theories; for the economic fatalism which takes all incentive out of the struggle for social justice.

The old Socialist propagandists were well-read men and women saturated in the life and literature of their country; they spoke the language of the common people; the new type of propaganda based on hatred and ill will, couched in language which few people understand, is destroying much of the good achieved by the pioneers.

Marx has his proper place as an economist and social historian, but as the leader of new religion he is a common danger.

ERNEST E. HUNTER

72a Queen's Road,
Richmond, Surrey.

SIR,—I pointed out that the humanitarian movement in European morals dated from the eighteenth century, i.e., exactly the time when the authority of Christianity began to decline, and that therefore humanitarian reforms could not be credited to Christianity. Professor Joad replies by pleading "a prodigious time lag." Prodigious indeed! So prodigious—14 centuries all told—that it might have led Professor Joad to enquire whether

Christianity *in fact* ever prohibited the evils of which he speaks. Like most Rationalists, I read my Bible, and am therefore able to inform Professor Joad that "the code of ethics prescribed by Christ" completely ignores the duties of States and the rights of the subject, and has nothing to say on the subject of torture or trials for witchcraft. Duelling may be held to be forbidden by the command to turn the other cheek; but as nobody—not even Professor Joad—takes that command literally, we can leave it alone.

It is a pity to see Professor Joad flogging horses that were dead before he was born. He attributes to Marxism the idea that ethical concepts are *only* a reflection of class interests, and infers that there will be no ethics in a classless society! Of course, no Marxist has said anything so silly. Ethics, as Engels makes clear in *The Origin of the Family*, begin in prehistoric society, in the solidarity of the *gens*, before classes are heard of. Once the the old Gentile society breaks up and civilised class society begins, ethical values break up too, and become a reflection of class interests. The return of a classless society will mean, in L. H. Morgan's words, "a revival, in a higher form, of the liberty, equality and fraternity of the ancient *gentes*."

Professor Joad complains that Communist values are "centred upon the goods of the body." Belfort Bax long ago disposed of this nonsense by pointing out, in his *Ethics of Socialism*, that the satisfaction of bodily wants for all is the indispensable preliminary to that cultured life for all which Marxists desire as much as Professor Joad. Really, it is time present-day "Socialists" began to go to school with their grandparents. ARCHIBALD ROBERTSON

5 Frenchay Road, Oxford.

THE SASSOON DYNASTY

SIR,—In his reply to Mr. Cecil Roth's letter, Mr. Raymond Mortimer, discussing the problem of Jewish "exclusiveness," speaks of "Jews whose religion prevents them eating in the houses of their Gentile fellow-citizens." Lest this should foster misunderstanding in a field where there tend to be far too many misunderstandings already, may I offer the suggestion that, wherever this inhibition appears to operate, it is in no sense a form of religious exclusiveness as such, but simply the consequence of the admittedly inconvenient and perhaps unfortunate adherence to the Deuteronomical injunctions as to diet? The difficulty has usually been that most Gentiles know little and care less about rules of eating which seem to them rather silly. They regard them with ill-disguised impatience, and, not unnaturally, the Jew to whom, for good or ill, these things mean much, forms a habit of declining invitations sooner than risk the raised eyebrows and pained surprise which are apt to greet the tentative enquiry about the possibility of a slightly modified menu.

In spite of all this, however, some fully-practising Jews do, to my certain knowledge, feel it worth while to master their diffidence and explain their particularity in the interests of good fellowship and for the sake of neighbourly relations. Incidentally, no difficulty arises at all at the tables of the stricter sort of vegetarians; in the absence of the wrong kinds of food the taboo is wholly removed. Even in my own non-vegetarian household, a Quaker one as it happens, we found no real difficulty in entertaining for eighteen months on end a young Jew of the most uncompromising "orthodoxy." The only prerequisites were sufficient interest in one's guest to be willing to pay a little attention to his wants, a willingness to vary ever so little the household's own regimen, and confidence on the part of the guest himself that his idiosyncrasies were understood and would be respected. The extra trouble in the kitchen was, after the first week or so, negligible. Indeed, now, long after the guest has been whisked off to Australia on the *Dunera*, we are finding our experience in catering for Kosher requirements a considerable asset, when we have perforce to manage largely without meat and cheese. JUDAEOPHIL

CONSCRIPTION IN NORTH IRELAND

SIR,—Like other Irish people who have hoped to see a growth of good relations between Great Britain and Eire, I have read with profound dismay that the conscription of Irish Nationalists in Ulster is contemplated.

Do the British people not realise that the resentment of Nationalists held under the Belfast Government is lasting and intense? That they constitute a third of the population of the partitioned area and a majority in two of the six counties? Do British statesmen fail to realise the profound solidarity which unites the people of Eire with their fellow-nationalists of the north? Are the consequences of the conscription attempt in 1918 forgotten? England lost Ireland then.

Hitler has done mad things and immoral things, but he has not yet, I believe, attempted to conscript into his army the inhabitants of the territories forcibly occupied.

I do not think that the British Government will take further steps in this direction, but the mere suggestion will have re-awakened bitter distrust in Ireland and the conviction that Sydney Smith's dictum is not yet out of date: "The moment the very name of Ireland is mentioned, the English seem to bid adieu to common feeling, common prudence and common sense."

DOROTHY MACARDLE

45 Inverness Terrace, W.2.

SUNDAY THEATRES

SIR,—May I correct a false impression conveyed by the letter you publish from the Secretary of the Imperial Alliance for the Defence of Sunday? He writes: "We have worked with and for the actors, to protect their Sunday." Actually, the only body representing actors, their trade union, British Equity, strongly and actively supported the Sunday Theatres Order. One actor, I believe, and one only, took part in the agitation against the Order; but even he would not question that the vast majority of his fellows are in favour of Sunday opening. Wherever the Sabbatarians got their backing, it was not from actors.

6A Pembridge Crescent, W.11. GUY VERNEY

SIR,—In connection with the above, many people would like to be assured that the zeal of Mr. Codd and his supporters for "Sunday as a day of rest" obtains when it is a question of their own bodily comforts. Do they, for instance, forgo fresh milk in their Sunday tea, all domestic help in the house on that day, and Monday morning newspapers?

The County Hall, A. EMIL DAVIES
London, S.E.1.

INTOLERANCE AT OTTAWA

SIR,—I read in *The Evening Standard* for May 13th that "Ottawa has joined other cities in removing Colonel Lindbergh's books from its libraries, declaring 'He has shown by his utterances that he is sympathetic to the Axis.'"

Why have the Ottawa authorities been so half-hearted in showing by their action that they are sympathetic with the Axis as not publicly to burn these books (mostly, I believe, about travel) according to the best Nazi model?

Voltaire's dictum: "I disagree absolutely with what you say, but will defend to the death your right to say it" was recently set as a subject in a Prize Essay Competition for the British Army; but what is good enough for the front line in Great Britain is apparently not good enough for the home front in Canada. BUREAUCRAT

"A SAD HISTORY"

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to the article by "Critic" in your paper of May 10th. If he will kindly read *The Spectator* of May 16th he will realise that he writes as unnecessarily in defence of Mrs. Woolf as does Mr. MacCarthy "in his devastating reply" to my letter in the *Sunday Times* of April 27th. It is astonishing how people of literary talent can be so "obtuse" that they cannot see what is obvious to ordinary people.

Being "the wife of a Bishop," it appears to be a crime to have been "vexed" (a mild word!) at the harm she knew, from personal experience, could be done by that coroner's remark. The words were kindly meant for the few but were unkind to many others, especially as said in connection with the appalling tragedies of this war.

Your "Critic" goes on to eulogise Mrs. Woolf, a thing very welcome, but it is beside the point in connection with my letter. I clearly was not criticising her action. That was a secondary matter.

The Old Palace, Lincoln. KATHLEEN HICKS

[Mr. Desmond MacCarthy seems to have been justified in saying that it would not be worth while to explain to Mrs. Hicks why some people are peculiarly sensitive. The Coroner stated that Mrs. Woolf had "a sad history of nervousness," and, in view of that statement and of the facts revealed at the inquest, we see no reason to modify our opinion that Mrs. Hicks's question "Where shall we all be if we listen to, and sympathise with, this sort of 'I cannot carry on'?" was both obtuse and uncharitable.—ED., *N.S.&N.*]

BEFORE DAWN

Sir,—In my article "Before Dawn" there is a misprint which I venture to correct, because it has already caused me some correspondence. In the last paragraph but two, the final sentence should read: "Nor does the need to recast our educational institutions to fit the needs of a hardier, more self-reliant and courageous generation of man *fail to* suggest cleavages of opinion on altogether new lines, and cutting right across existing affiliations." The words *fail to* got omitted by someone's fault—mine or another's. G. D. H. COLE

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE unceasing tides of taste have, during the last twenty-five years, made the Metaphysical School of poetry most fashionable among the younger generation of poets and critics. Contemporary verse-writers look to Donne for an example, and justly claim that their obscurity is hardly greater than his. It is evidently to the good that we should be persuaded to make the effort needed for the enjoyment of Herbert, Vaughan and Crashaw; but there is a noticeable vogue for denigrating other orders of poetic beauty. The main current of English verse, I suggest, runs through Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Gray, Wordsworth and Tennyson—it is a European current that has its sources in Greece and Rome and that can profitably be compared with similar streams in Italy and France, from which, indeed, frequent channels have brought to it further width and depth. The poetry of the Metaphysicals is remarkable and rich, a backwater exuberant with rare flowers, and not unconnected with certain little-visited Continental creeks named Gongora and Marini. But to denigrate Milton or Keats for the greater glory of the Metaphysicals seems to me as unnecessary as it is provincial. Metaphysical poetry was, in no pejorative sense, grotesque. Johnson defined its practice "as a kind of *discordia concors;* a combination of dissimilar images, a discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike." In modern terms one would say that it aimed at the exploitation of incongruities. Much less visual than the main stream, it illustrated by concepts rather than by objects; or else employed objects in such a context that they cannot be visualised by the imagination. (Browning, Hopkins and Meredith in their individual ways can be considered to resume the Metaphysicals' exploration of the grotesque, but their poetry is conspicuously more visual.) Donne, the founder of the School, invented a technique that in the hands of men lacking his stupendous force of intellectual imagination—a Cleveland, for instance, or a Benlowes—could produce at best entertaining whimsicalities. (And both these poets do in fact afford pleasure and entertainment.) The best of Donne's influence can be studied in Marvell and even more conspicuously in George Herbert. And here is a new, most scholarly, and indeed definitive, edition of Herbert, the publication of which at the present time, and in such admirable printing, does infinite credit to its publishers. (*The Works of George Herbert.* Edited by F. E. Hutchinson. Oxford. 30s.)

Rightly exalted as one of the major glories of Anglicanism, the "mild" Herbert is often thought to personify the distinguishing qualities of the Established Church—its sobriety, its amiability, the fastidiousness that one recognises in its swept and ungarnished cathedrals, resonant with the silvery intoning of Minor Canons and the soaring bird-notes of apple-cheeked choristers, so incomparably more tasteful (and less potent) than the quick mutterings and nasal yells that you hear among the dim, tawdry altars and undusted confessionals of the cathedrals in Italy and Spain. The poems by which Herbert is usually represented in anthologies confirm this impression, "Love bade me welcome," "When God at first made man," and "I got me flowers to straw thy way." But a complete reading of Herbert's poetry makes a richer, more tenebrous effect. His mysticism, it is true, usually avoids the erotic language that springs naturally to the lips of most Catholic poets. He treats God as a father, an uncle, or a friend rather than as a lover. But the intensity of his emotion is none the less violent for not being luscious. The black night of the soul, through which mystics must pass, descended upon him not once but again and again, so that he was always suffering new agonies from what might be called the Divine capriciousness. For a moment, as in *The Collar* (to my sense almost his finest poem), he would rebel. Usually he bowed his head.

> To have my aim, and yet to be
> Further from it then when I bent my bow;
> To make my hopes my torture, and the fee
> Of all my woes another wo,
> Is in the midst of delicates to need,
> And ev'n in Paradise to be a weed.
>
> Profanenesse in my head,
> Defects and darknesse in my breast,
> A noise of passions ringing me for dead
> Unto a place where is no rest:
> Poor priest thus am I drest.
>
> O do not blinde me!
> I have deserv'd that an Egyptian night
> Should thicken all my powers; because my lust
> Hath still sow'd fig-leaves to exclude thy light:
> But I am frailtie, and already dust;
> O do not grinde me!

He is seized by the mystics' perception that Christ suffers within all men, including himself:

> Thy life on earth was grief, and thou art still
> Constant unto it, making it to be
> A point of honour, now to grieve in me,
> And in thy members suffer ill.
>
> My friend may spit upon my curious floore:
> Would he have gold? I lend it instantly;
> But let the poore,
> And thou within them, starve at doore.
> I cannot use a friend as I use Thee.

I suspect the last quotation of reflecting an actual incident: Herbert was an invalidish aristocrat, and the poems, no less than *A Priest to the Temple*, suggest an almost exaggerated concern for cleanliness. He is obsessed, like Donne and nearly all convinced Christians, with the grave. Usually he thinks of death in terms of dust rather than of corruption and the worm; but I fancy he found even dust disgusting:

> . . . till death blow
> The dust into our eyes:
> For by that powder thou wilt make me see.
>
> When th'hair is sweet through pride and lust
> The powder doth forget the dust.

Or examine this Shakespearean image:

> And wanton in thy cravings, thou mayst know,
> That flesh is but the glasse, which holds the dust
> That measures all our time.

Sometimes, however, he turns a horrified eye at uglier intimations of mortality:

> The brags of life are but a nine dayes wonder;
> And after death the fumes that spring
> From private bodies make as big a thunder,
> As those which rise from a huge King.

His most beautiful poem about death is *Mortification:*

> When boyes go first to bed,
> They step into their voluntarie graves,
> Sleep bindes them fast: onely their breath
> Makes them not dead;
> Successive nights, like rolling waves,
> Convey them quickly, who are bound for death.

Herbert talks of having known the ways of pleasure, "The proposition of hot blood and brains; What mirth and musick mean"—"My stuffe is fleshe, not brasse; my senses live, And grumble oft." Yet one feels that ambition and social pride, rather than the grosser appetites, were his besetting temptations, or afflictions:

> We are the earth; and they
> Like moles within us, heave, and cast about;
> And till they foot and clutch their prey,
> They never cool. . . .

In his worldly days, as Public Orator of Cambridge, he had been a friend of Bacon, and a successful flatterer of James I—two uncommonly nasty fellows. It is not surprising, therefore, if his memories leave him misanthropic moods:

> Surely if each one saw anothers heart,
> There would be no commerce,
> No sale or bargain passe: all would disperse
> And live apart.

But a worldly good sense sometimes reinforces his pieties, as in these verses against unavailing anxiety:

> God chains the dog till night; wilt loose the chain,
> And wake thy sorrow?
> Wilt thou forestall it, and now grieve to-morrow,
> And then again
> Grieve over freshly all thy pain?
>
> Either grief will not come: or if it must
> Do not forecast.
> And while it cometh, it is almost past.
> Away distrust:
> My God hath promis'd; he is just.

Herbert was much attached to music, and writes perceptively of its effects; as in this address to church-music:

> Now I in you without a bodie move,
> Rising and falling with your wings:
> We both together sweetly live and love,
> Yet say sometimes, *God help poore Kings.*

And whereas Donne was the first to divorce lyric poetry from "words for music"—an invention obviously of the highest importance—Herbert's poems would almost all admit of being sung. His particular distinction is the patience with which he planned and built each of his poems as an entity. If in short quotations he seems to be less dazzling and piercing than Vaughan (who borrowed from him indefatigably), his poems as wholes are much superior. He subdues his fancy to his general design, but not from any shortage of wit.

> The nimble Diver with his side
> Cuts through the working waves, that he may fetch
> His dearely-earned pearl, which God did hide
> On purpose from the ventrous wretch;
> That he might save his life, and also hers,
> Who with excessive pride
> Her own destruction and his danger wears.

The last line represents the Metaphysical technique at its happiest.

He can make a whole poem of juxtaposed images, as in the sonnet on Prayer, or in *Dotage*, where he describes the pleasures of the world:

> False glozing pleasures, casks of happinesse,
> Foolish night-fires, women and children's wishes,
> Chases in Arras, guilded emptinesse,
> Shadows well mounted, dreams in a career,
> Embroider'd lyes, nothing between two dishes.

He does not entirely avoid naif absurdities:

> Most things move th'underjaw; the Crocodile not.
> Most things sleep lying; th'Elephant leans or stands.

(This is part of a long poem arguing the power of God from Design and Providence: the reader of seventeenth-century writers is often obliged to wonder how clever men could be so silly, and all one's efforts to understand the mental climate do not provide an answer.) But such lapses are comparatively rare in Herbert. Finally, he excels our other religious poets not only in taste and shapeliness but in variety of feeling, which is reflected in the unsurpassed variety of his prosodic forms.

I have tried to summarise my sense of Herbert's poetry by illustration rather than by comment. It remains only to emphasise again the excellence of this edition. Canon Hutchinson has been fortunate in having few serious textual problems to resolve. He follows the Bodleian manuscript (which is not an autograph) verbally, but uses the first edition in spelling, punctuation, etc. His lavish notes, with their richness of references to the most obscure sources, afford invaluable illumination. His refusal, moreover, to accept the order arbitrarily decided by G. H. Palmer in the best of preceding editions, seems to be based on excellent reasons. One line, on which he provides no note, kept me puzzling for a long while:—"Clouds cool by heat and baths by cooling boil." At last I surmised it to mean: "Clouds are dissolved by the hot sun into cooling showers, and cold baths make men feel warm afterwards." I am far from certain that this conclusion is correct. RAYMOND MORTIMER

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THE TRADITION OF LIBERTY

Political Liberty: A History of the Conception in the Middle Ages and Modern Times. By A. J. CARLYLE. *Oxford University Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The value of Dr. Carlyle's facts considerably outweighs that of his commentary upon them. As the facts which he deals with are ideas, our first sentence means that the ideas of which he writes the history are of more importance and interest than his own ideas about them. Dr. Carlyle's book is the history of the idea of political freedom from the Middle Ages until to-day. He deals, therefore, with what a long line of philosophers, jurists, publicists, and propagandists have written about liberty. He is more interested in the past than the present and he says little about the development of the idea of political liberty after the French Revolution. He is also chiefly interested in the more philosophical or abstract conception of liberty, and the views of statesmen or active politicians are rarely examined by him. The bias of his book is, therefore, from the start rather academic and the relation between theory and practice—so important in political history—is frequently forgotten. Subject to these limitations, his book has certain considerable merits. He gives a clear and concise account of the doctrine with regard to political liberty preached by a long succession of thinkers and writers in the Middle Ages, the seventeenth century, and the eighteenth century. Many of these, from Althusius to Rousseau, are the ordinary landmarks of the ordinary text-book on political thought, and there is not much to be said about them which has not been said a good many times before. But, particularly in his chapters on the seventeenth century, Dr. Carlyle leaves the beaten track and analyses the views of writers like Coquille, Loyseau, and Joly in France, Covarruvias, Ribadeneyra, and Saavedra in Spain, Contzen and Arumaeus in Germany, who are almost unknown to most readers.

The analysis of the doctrines of these obscurer thinkers when combined with that of the more famous men is of real value. It shows clearly an unbroken tradition with regard to political liberty in Europe from the Middle Ages—or rather from ancient Greece—to the time of Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. It is important to know that in the France of 1653 Joly still "looked upon the States General," which had not been called together for 40 years and would not be summoned again until the French Revolution, "as representing an essential element in the traditional government of France," or that in the Spain of 1640 Saavedra adopted much the same attitude towards the Cortes. And this brings us to Dr. Carlyle's views and to the reasons why they now seem to us somewhat inadequate. His thesis is that this tradition of political liberty existed in the Middle Ages and that it was handed down unbroken and practically unchanged until the nineteenth century. That tradition maintained that the authority of the ruler or government was derived from the consent of the people or community, that the supremacy of the law applied both to the ruler and to the subject, and the law itself was not a command of an absolute ruler, but the expression of the custom or habit of life of the community, and therefore required its consent.

In general there is a good deal of truth in this thesis and it has its historical importance. But Dr. Carlyle's use of it makes his treatment of the history of political liberty curiously naïve and monotonous. He is an expert and specialist on mediæval political thought, and, like so many historical specialists, he unconsciously holds a brief for his "period" and is inclined to assume that nothing new or of much importance could possibly have happened after it. Again and again Dr. Carlyle clearly explains the views of some seventeenth or eighteenth century writer and then dismisses him with the comment that fundamentally there was nothing new in his doctrines for they derive from the Middle Ages. It is, of course, useful to point out that elements in the doctrines of, say, Locke, Burke, and Paine can be traced in some mediæval writer, and that the political theories of Paine were derived from Locke, who inherited them from the Middle Ages. But if you stop there, you reduce the greater part of political thought to academic sterility. Two of the most famous books of the last years of the eighteenth century seem to indicate that there was a fundamental difference of opinion with regard to political liberty between Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine, and I doubt whether, if John Locke had been alive in 1791, he would have agreed that the doctrines of *Civil Government* and *The Rights of Man* are the same. Dr. Carlyle deals with Locke, with Burke, and with Paine, but entirely ignores this kind of divergence of view. It is as though a botanist attempted to classify plants by the characteristics which they have in common and ignored their differences.

LEONARD WOOLF

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Parents and Children. By I. COMPTON-BURNETT. *Gollancz.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

"It is the intangibility of the distinction that gives it its point," says Luce, on an early page of *Parents and Children*, discussing whether her father should join her grandfather, or wait for her grandfather to join him. The residence of Fulbert, his wife Eleanor and their nine children, with Luce at the head, in the house of Fulbert's parents, Sir Jesse and Lady Sullivan, in itself creates a situation in which distinctions are bound to appear. The family fabric of pride and feeling, in which the 13 Sullivans and their dependents all play their part, has no ordinary groundwork: it starts to rise from the level that Miss Compton Burnett's novels, in their depiction of living, always assume. There are, that is to say, none of the obvious squalors and enmities. For instance, Lady Sullivan (Regan), of whose three children Fulbert only survives, is a furnace of motherhood, whose interior roar can be heard when some incident opens the door to her nature. But her attitude to Fulbert's wife is not hostile. "She looked at Eleanor with a guarded, neutral expression. She could not see her with affection, as they were not bound by blood; and the motives of her son's choice of her were as obscure to her as such motives to other mothers; but she respected her for her hold on him, and was grateful to her for the children. And she had a strong appreciation of her living beneath her roof. . . . The two women lived in a formal accord, which had never come to dependence; and while each saw the other as a fellow and an equal, neither would have grieved at the other's death."

Eleanor's maternity is less positive. In fact, her lack of gift for this role is commented on by her children, constantly in her presence and unfailingly when she has left a room. Eleanor Sullivan has, at forty-eight, "a serious, honest, somewhat equine face, and a nervous, uneasy, controlled expression." She passes from floor to floor of the house, moves to and fro between the schoolroom and nursery, plucking upon the harp-strings of her young's sensibility with an inexpert but always hopeful hand. Throughout the early part of the book she is attempting to rally the children's feeling—attempting, in fact, to drill the nine Sullivans for the climax of a sort of ballet of sorrow—for their father's forthcoming departure for South America. But Eleanor, if she does not captivate, exercises a pull of her own. She enjoys, without intermittence, Fulbert's ironic affection. And, immediately upon Fulbert's reported death, she is wooed by a neighbour, the inscrutable Ridley Cranmer.

The nine children fall into three groups—Luce, Daniel and Graham, young adults; Isabel, Venice and James, the schoolroom party, under the passive control of Miss Mitford, the governess, and Honor, Gavin and Nevill, the nursery children, under the dispensation of the nurse Hatton, her underling Mullet (of the fox-like features and the dramatised youth) and in a state of skirmish with Miss Pilbeam, the nursery governess, whose ingredients are honest-ness and faith. Actually, Hatton's dispensation extends a good way beyond the nursery bounds: a woman of fewer words than most of the characters, she has the Sullivan make-up perfectly taped. To say that the Sullivans have a Nannie-complex would be to speak on a lower level than the novel deserves. The relationship of the family with the two governesses is—as is usual with Miss Compton Burnett—perfectly done: it does not cease to be analysed, from both sides, with an imperturbable lack of feeling and zest for truth. "I like all cold; I like even ice," says one of the children—though in another context. And an icy sharpness prevails in their dialogue. In fact, to read in these days a page of Compton Burnett dialogue is to think of the sound of glass being swept up, one of these London mornings after a blitz. There are detonations in the Sullivan home—Fulbert's departure, his letter to Isabel, the news of his death, his widow's engagement, the show-down with Ridley, the discovery of Sir Jesse's illicit paternity—each creates a momentary shock of dullness, each is measured by this mortality of fine glass.

With each novel, Miss Compton Burnett adds to her gallery. Figures she has already, in another novel, created, she is content—and content with deliberation—to rename and to put, in *Parents and Children*, to a this time purely formalised use. For the Cranmer family (with the exception of Faith, who is new), for the three mysterious Marlowes and for the three eldest of the nine Sullivans, Miss Compton Burnett seems to me to rely, and rightly, on our progressive acquaintanceship with one kind of person—what one might call the illustrative rather than the functional character. In *Parents and Children*, these play subsidiary parts. In *Parents and Children* the high light falls on, and genius is evident in, the younger Sullivan children and their immediate world. Especially James and Nevill. I know no children like James and Nevill; there may *be* no children like James and Nevill—in fact, the point of this author's genius is that it puts out creatures to which it might defy life to approximate. James and Nevill, of a beauty divorced from sentiment, *are*, in *Parents and Children*—one cannot question them; they are more living than life. There are also Honor, Gavin, the tearful, complex, articulate Isabel, and Venice—this last more lightly, though as surely, touched in. To say that this book depicts the repercussion of grown-up crisis on children would be incorrect. The children's intensive, moment-to-moment living is for each a solitary crisis, that each maintains: grown-up sense of crisis, grown-up drama do no more than splinter upon these diamond rocks. It is the strength of Lady Sullivan, the strength of Miss Mitford, the strength of Hatton that they recognise the children's inviolability.

In this novel, as in the others, relationships remain static. The dialogue, in less than half of a phrase, in the click of a camera-shutter, shifts from place to place. The careless reader, for instance, must look back twice to discover at which point the departing Fulbert's carriage drives off. Scenes, on the other hand, are played out without mercy, to an attenuation

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felt by each of the characters. Most notably, the scene of Fulbert's departure. "Well, it cannot go on much longer, boys," Fulbert says to his elder sons, as they all stand in the hall. "If there were any reason why it should stop," says Graham, "surely it would have operated by now." Luce says: "The train will become due." The train is the only artificial interference, by Time.

Is this a book for *now?* Decidedly, yes. And for the "now" not only of already avowed readers of Miss Compton Burnett. *Parents and Children*, coming at this juncture, is a book with which new readers might well begin. Miss Compton Burnett, as ever, makes few concessions; she has not, like some of our writers, been scared or moralised into attempts to converge on the "real" in life. But possibly, life has converged on her. Elizabethan implacability, tonic plainness of speaking, are not so strange to us as they were. This is a time for *hard* writers—and here is one.

ELIZABETH BOWEN

THE MONSTER IN ERMINE

Judge Jeffreys. By H. MONTGOMERY HYDE. *Harrap.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Only one of the Lord Chancellors of England can claim to have stood the test of being challenged, dressed as a common seaman, his face blackened with coal dust, in the act of drinking a pot of beer in the bar of The Red Cow at Wapping. It was Jeffreys who, when recognised by a member of a hostile mob under these unusual circumstances, answered with simple dignity, "I am the man." But even without this episode, only someone with a very blunt Whig axe to grind could fail to see that Macaulay's "wicked judge" was not an inhuman monster. Jeffreys' real trouble, apart from being a Tory, was that he was a good deal more human than a consistently successful man can afford to be. A shade more craftiness, a saving touch of pomposity, and he could not have let his Welsh tongue run away with him in court nor mimicked his learned colleagues after dinner with quite so much gusto, nor remained loyal to King James II just too long.

He rose so fast and arrived so young that he carried into high office not only a sense of humour, but an itch to show off. At one end of his career he could make a love-match with the penniless lady who had been his ally in the fruitless pursuit of an heiress; at the other he could not resist making rather snarling fun of the saintly Baxter and his chorus of devout Puritans when they got into trouble about Bishops. Like most vain convivial souls, he had plenty of friends to whom he played up, who got his portrait painted and laughed at his jokes. Like most tough fighters, he made enemies at whom he laughed. He might have laughed to the end if James II had kept his throne.

As it is, the picture of the Monster in Ermine crowning a long career of malevolence by gloating over the Bloody Assize will no doubt survive Mr. Hyde's rather half-hearted attack as it has survived the more spirited onslaughts of H. B. Irving and Lord Birkenhead. Few things stick closer than one of Macaulay's masks, and it was a really horrid one that he chose to clamp on poor old Jeffreys; but defter and stronger fingers than Mr. Hyde's are needed to get rid of it altogether and disclose the not unfriendly if irritable countenance of a shrewd lawyer and a loyal servant of the crown.

KENNETH BELL

DETECTION

The Whispering Cup. By MABEL SEELEY. *Collins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

I Wanted to Murder. By CLARISSA FAIRCHILD CUSHMAN. *Methuen.* 8*s.*

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The Little Captain. By H. C. BAILEY. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Traitor's Purse. By MARGERY ALLINGHAM. *Heinemann.* 8*s.*

Unjust Jury. By WINIFRED DUKE. *Jarrolds.* 9*s.*

Miss Mabel Seeley has only published three detective stories, but she must take her place already among the best of her sex. *The Whispering Cup* is so good of its kind that I doubt whether the authoress will ever succeed in writing anything better. If she can go on writing as well, she will oust Mrs. Eberhart from her American throne; for Miss Seeley provides as much intensity and excitement as Mrs. Eberhart at her best, without the spurious overtones of melodrama. The Cup, of *The Whispering Cup*, is a sunken village in the flat grain belt of the Middle West, inhabited by the Americanised descendants of original Norwegian stock, a small community of religious, hardworking backbiting farmers. Fate broods over the Cup in the Ibsen tradition appropriate to its inhabitants. If you are of Norwegian origin and till the soil in a vague state of cultural yearning, you are bound to fall a prey to money-grubbing and nostalgia. These, in turn, lead to family jealousies and sin. And sin, as we all know, is the first step along the road to crime. Solveig, the heroine, returns to the Cup after an unsuccessful excursion into the outside world of Chicago, already enveloped in an aura of wickedness to the suspicious eyes of the Cup. So when the murders begin—and gruesome murders they are—it is lucky for Solveig that she is accustomed to call the Sheriff "Uncle." I will not spoil the brilliant sequence of the story by giving any details of the plot, but I can assure readers they have a treat in store. Miss Seeley dodges the pitfall that waylays most competent female writers of detection by refusing to tell us too much about her characters. They are outlined firmly and deftly, but beneath the surface we are left to guess at all sorts of Norwegian conflicts and murderous aspirations. The identity of the criminal is thus concealed to the very last—a *tour de force* for a lady who describes her people so realistically and yet plays so scrupulously fair by her readers.

After giving *The Whispering Cup* first prize I can only offer a "Highly Commended" to Miss Cushman. If you can imagine a stupider Mrs. Miniver finding herself and her family involved in a couple of murders in New England, you will have a fair idea of *I Wanted to Murder*. "Loyalty" is the prime virtue of the Miniver family, and it is the incorrigible loyalty of Sally that leads to all the trouble in *I Wanted to Murder*. She never splits on her husband, her son, her friends, her acquaintances, or even—ultimate perversity—on her enemies; and as a just punishment for such indiscriminate folly she finds *herself* denounced as the murderess. Whether you like the type or not, Miniverismus is the easiest stuff to read; and there is a fascination about Sally that makes *I Wanted to Murder* much more entertaining than it has any right to be on its detective merits. For the plot itself is slight and would be solved in half a jiffy if it were not for Sally's unparalleled code of ethics.

The Wedding Guest Sat on a Stone and *Run for Your Money* are both slick Americans, not above the average for speed, but sufficiently fast to get along; the first is slapstick along the Mexican border, the second a tough assignment in New York; both reek of alcohol, but sex does not rear its ugly head quite as high as usual.

Scientific detectives involve their creators in continuous research. Mr. Rhode is always having to study encyclopaedias and manuals of forensic medicine to find something new for Dr. Priestley to solve. His latest discovery, on which *Death at the Helm* is based, is a most unconvincing method of poisoning. The story opens dramatically enough, with a motor-yacht running aground on a sandbank with a crew of two—both corpses: and there is another dramatic moment at the end, which I cannot tell about. Dragging along in between comes this elaborate poisoning, solely for Dr. Priestley's benefit. Even if it were good I wouldn't like it, as they say in films. But it is clumsy, technical and bungled. Mr. Rhode's style becomes

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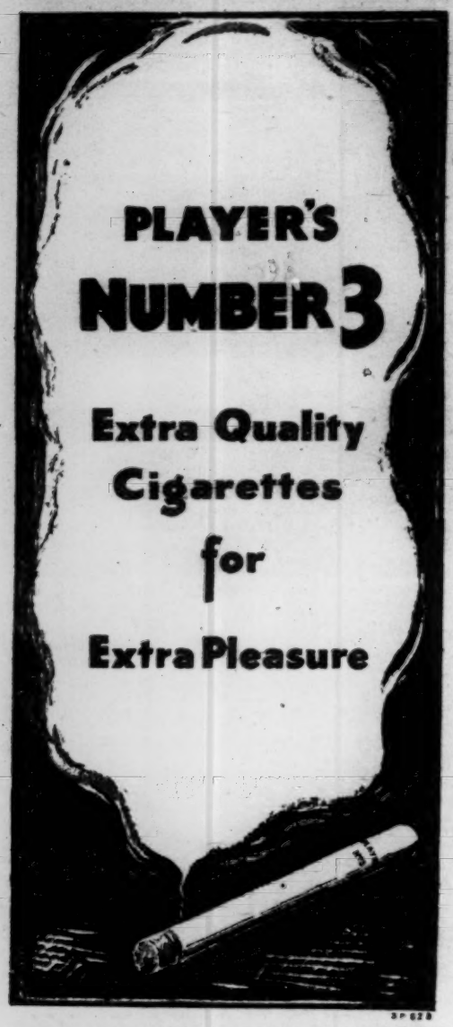

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closer, with every book, to the deep-chested monotone of Mr. Wills Crofts.

Death by Dynamite is heavily padded but readable, if you can read fast, otherwise you may easily fall into a trance while Simon Rolfe, the crime analyst, fails to analyse this particular crime. Mr. Bonney is guilty of the primary error in detection; his crime is too clueless and clever; only a confession by the criminal can solve it. In America, we are told, they sometimes get these confessions by the use of rubber hose. Simon Rolfe's method of staging a Spiritualist *séance*, if not as brutal, seems just as primitive intellectually. Still, Mr. Bonney manages to make it quite exciting.

Mr. Bailey does not pick out the hardest rows to hoe, but I confess I am slightly shocked to find *The Little Captain* is just a war thriller, with poor old Clunk dragged in to give it countenance. Admiralty secrets are being transmitted to Germany from the heart of Mayfair. Surely a job for Reggie Fortune? No, Reggie is saved for higher things, such as detection: Clunk must do the dirty work of spy-hunting. As a war thriller the book is no better than it should be, as if Mr. Bailey's heart was not quite in his work.

Miss Allingham, too, takes the line of least resistance, and sets her darling Albert Campion to hunt the Fifth Column in *Traitor's Purse*. But he at least makes an exciting job of it by losing his memory before the story opens. A splendid game of blindman's-buff ensues; for as Campion is unable to remember even his own name, he cannot distinguish friend from foe in the *mêlée*. If England has to be saved by every distinguished detective in turn, I would as soon witness her salvation by Campion as any of them; for Miss Allingham never forgets how to write, even when she sinks to a thriller.

Miss Duke is more of a crime analyst than a detective writer. *Unjust Jury* gives the true story of the trial of Mrs. De La Mere for murder. First, we get a peep into the life-history of each member of the jury; then, the motives that actuate them in reaching their verdict; finally, Mrs. De La Mere's actions and state of mind: an interesting psychological tour. But Miss Duke is constantly straining for effect. Her jurymen and women lead hectic lives and brood over their crimes. So does Mrs. De La Mere. Do criminals brood? I have no experience, but I doubt it. In the last war some half million Germans were killed by Englishmen now alive, but I never knew any one of those responsible lose a night's sleep in consequence. Miss Duke underestimates the readiness even of ordinary people to forgive themselves. I am sure anyone wanting to murder would find a perfect excuse before he began.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

THE CIVIL SERVICE

The Growth of the British Civil Service. By EMMELINE W. COHEN. *Allen & Unwin.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Miss Cohen has written a competent survey of a great subject, but she has failed to make it come alive. That is due, I think, to two things. She has been largely content to take an external view of her theme by accepting, without any special enquiry, the assumptions of the official papers on the subject; a serious study of the Civil Service needs more, for instance, than a passing reference to Bentham, and it is surprising to find no reference at all to Graham Wallas, who wrote more wisely upon this subject than anyone in the last half-century. Nor is there any attempt to correlate the evolution of the Service with the problems of the State, of which it was the expression. That is an angle of approach essential to its understanding. The result is a good conventional study of the obvious material, but hardly more.

This is a pity, for a first-class book on the Civil Service is an urgent need. No one doubts the great qualities it has shown since 1870—incorruptibility, detachment, loyalty to the Government of the day. But the experience of the last ten or twelve years has raised grave problems about its fundamental character which Miss Cohen can hardly be said even to have raised. In the light of the new problems with which the State is presented, it is at least open to question whether the present methods of recruitment and of promotion can continue.

She says nothing about the problem of initiative—already urgent and likely to grow more so. She does not raise the issues connected with the confinement of the sources of the administrative class to so narrow a section of the community—a matter which, in the diplomatic realm, has led to disastrous results in the last ten years.

Nor has she really faced the problems involved in the virtual sterilisation of Whitleyism. Apart from its original impetus, it cannot really be claimed that its success has been more than minutiæ; above all, it has never been the source of the creativeness it could have been had the official side been more ready to experiment with its possibilities. She gives us the formal facts about Treasury control, but not that informal insight into the "Treasury mind" which has been one of the least valuable things in the Service—the sacrifice of imagination to formal efficiency. On the vexed question between the expert and the administrator, she tells us what Sir Robert Morant planned, and what the Carpenter Committee recommended; but she does not explain the failure of the first and the inadequacy of the results which have followed from the second.

In the result, Miss Cohen's view is a largely external one. The issues raised by the history of the Civil Service cut far deeper than she seems to have realised. They raise quite ultimate questions about the purpose of the State. Only by setting them in this context can they be seen in their proper perspective.

HAROLD J. LASKI

Horizon. May, 1941. 1*s.*

The best *Horizon* that has yet been given to us. T. S. Eliot, Rose Macaulay, V. Sackville-West and William Plomer on reminiscences of Virginia Woolf—difficult to say which is the most vivid. A Spaniard, Arturo Barea, on the last Hemingway—all the more devastating for being courteous and even generous. A most amusing satire on the amenities of Soviet life by Patrick Kirwan. A most effective poem by A. L. Rowse. Some unpublished letters by Oscar Wilde, presented by A. J. A. Symons. Masterly photographs of London ruins by Cecil Beaton. Reproduction does not do justice to Euston Road pictures. Editor manifests dislike for Bayswater and Kensington, love for Chelsea, and war-worn disappointment with re-read Joyce and Proust.

Week-end Competitions

No. 590

Set by G. W. Stonier.

We offer the usual prizes of Two Guineas and Half-a-guinea for the best ten definitions from a Prude's Dictionary.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, June 2nd.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 587

Set by Rhoda MacGarlic

The usual prizes are offered for the best opening paragraph (not more than 250 words) for a novel

THE NATIONAL BANK OF INDIA

PROFITS WELL MAINTAINED

MR. R. LANGFORD JAMES'S REVIEW

The following is the statement by the Chairman (Mr. R. Langford James) which is to be submitted at the one hundred and twenty-seventh ordinary general meeting of the National Bank of India, Ltd., to be held on 27th May :—

It has been decided that the proceedings at our general meeting this year will be of a formal character. I take the opportunity, however, to address a few brief remarks to the shareholders instead of making the comprehensive survey of the bank's business usually expected from the Chairman.

Shortly after our last meeting we lost our Deputy-Chairman, Mr. J. A. Swan, whose sudden death is deplored deeply by all who knew him. A greatly respected and popular member of our Board, his colleagues desire to record their appreciation of Mr. Swan's valuable services. Since we met last the Board have appointed Mr. J. K. Michie and Mr. E. H. Lawrence directors. Mr. Michie succeeded Mr. Swan as chairman of Messrs. Steel Brothers and Co., Ltd., and we have reason to congratulate ourselves on having secured his valuable services.

It gave us great satisfaction to invite Mr. Lawrence, our general manager, to occupy a seat on the Board where his unrivalled knowledge of our business is of great value.

The net profits, which have been arrived at after making full provision for bad and doubtful debts and for taxation, amount to £439,943, and are only slightly lower than those earned during the previous year. The sum necessary to provide for taxation liability was considerably in excess of the previous year's requirements.

One of the principal features of the balance-sheet is the increase in the amount representing current, fixed deposit and other accounts, which aggregate £34,750,000, against just over £29 millions at the end of the previous year. This is coincident with a decrease of over £2,000,000 in the total of discounts, loans receivable and other sums due to the bank. It is interesting to note that the statements furnished by the scheduled banks to the Reserve Bank of India on 27th December last disclosed demand liabilities amounting to Rs.174,94,00,000, as against Rs.146,57,00,000 on 29th December, 1939, whereas their advances aggregated Rs.101,45,00,000, against Rs.143,16,00,000. Our cash on hand increased and the figure at which it stood—namely, £9½ millions odd—was £2,660,000 higher than at the close of the previous year, while the item on that occasion of £1½ millions representing loans payable has disappeared. Indian Government securities show little change, while British Government securities are £1,335,000 higher. These assets together amount to £14,646,000 and appear in the balance-sheet at a figure below the market value on the date our accounts were made up. Taken in conjunction with the large cash balance already alluded to the ratio to the bank's liability on current, fixed deposit and other accounts is slightly under 70 per cent. The only other item of note in the balance-sheet is the increase in the amount of bills of exchange outstanding of over £2½ millions, principally due to the longer period occupied in transit of the bills.

The directors thought it desirable to declare, instead of awaiting the approval of a final dividend, a further interim dividend, which was paid on 3rd April, making a total distribution for the year of 10 per cent.

They now propose to allocate a sum of £50,000 to the staff pension fund and £70,000 towards reduction of house property account. Provision under the latter heading will then have aggregated £220,000 during the last three years. The amount we propose to carry forward to the current year is practically the same as that brought in from the previous year's accounts.

Primarily we are an exchange bank, which means, of course, that we are interested in the flow of commodities from and to the countries in which we operate. When we take into account the fact that European markets outside those of the United Kingdom, and other markets also, are closed to our constituents for both outward and inward trade, and when we consider the strain imposed on shipping space, the effect on our business must be obvious. While there is no reason to suppose that we shall not continue to secure our usual share of such business as is being transacted, I must confess to viewing the immediate future as more likely to show results below the average than the reverse. Nevertheless, it is the case that often in business and usually in war the unexpected happens, and so I trust my forecast may prove to be unduly sombre.

Many of the staff are serving in the Forces of the Crown. We wish them God-speed, and we extend to them our heartfelt hopes for their safe return. A burden of extra work is being borne by those who have had to stay behind. In thanking them let me say that we are deeply sensible of all they are doing to keep the flag flying.

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PURELY PERSONAL

THE CHARGE FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS in this column is 2s. 3d. a line and while we are on the subject the price of a King Six Cigar is only 8d.

PERSONAL

HAPPY HOME OFFERED small child in Cotswolds as paying guest, share college trained nurse with baby. References exchanged. Reply to MRS. LAYNG, 69 Queen's Road, London, S.W.7.

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IT may now be revealed—that ANTHONY PANTING is and has been working for Pacifist Service Units from 6 Endsleigh Street, W.C.1. 5 Paddington Street, W.1, although temporarily windowless, is still the best address for letters.

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WANTED, unfurnished, part house or flat, 3 rooms, kitchen, bathroom, Hampstead or better. Box 9233.

LADY, 2 boys, wants rent unf. house, flat, safe area. Mod. terms. BATEMAN, 18 Caledonia Place, Bristol, 8.

set in the reign of Edward VII. Competitors are invited to make what use they can of customs and objects that have since vanished into oblivion.

Report by Rhoda MacGarlic

Reading the entries took me happily back to my unhappy schooldays. The competitors excavated a wonderful assembly of half-forgotten objects and habits from below the accumulated dust of thirty-five years—sovereign-purses, hansoms, gold Alberts, by-passes on incandescent gas-brackets, black silk stockings, epergnes, the *Westminster Gazette*, ospreys in hats, penny stamps on letters, balloon-races, de Dion Boutons, serge skirts with prussian binding, Poole's Myriorama, phonograph-cylinders, hatpins, German bands, veils, infant prodigies, the smoky Underground, crossing-sweepers, hatguards, children in mailcarts, hip-baths, croquet-parties and moustache-cups. Mabel Christian Whitson achieved "a semi-grand piano decorated with painted sprays of wild roses and autumn leaves." Martin Walsh was the only contributor to give his story a proletarian setting, with shawls and clogs. One competitor included all the things that the war has banished; another thought that samplers were characteristically Edwardian; John Irvine produced exquisite illustrations and notepaper of typically Edwardian mauve. Here is a beginning I have made myself with fifteen properties that, surprisingly, no competitor employed.

"I leave it you, partner," Aimée declared, toying with her muff-chain and looking at the fireplace curtains adorned with laburnums in ribbon-work. Through the window she could see Septimus in his Norfolk jacket playing diabolo, her father in a Homburg hat putting on his motor-goggles, and in the distance the deserted bathing-machines. A smell of Tatcho was wafted from her partner's hair, and the tinkling of a two-step could be heard plainly from the house opposite because the street was covered with straw. Her neighbour, the Viceroy of Ireland, was dangerously ill from pneumonia, having been placed in a second-class railway carriage, with no foot-warmer.

I have no hesitation in recommending for first prize Barbara Fletcher. For the second, Irene Clayden, E. V. Milnes, John Thornton, J. Taylor and T, Gallant were seriously considered, but I concluded that it should be divided between R. S. Jaffray and Nancy Gunter.

FIRST PRIZE

A WOMAN'S PLACE

"Hook me up, will you please, Arthur?" said Kitty. She laid down the curling irons, added a pair of diamond combs, and drew on her beautiful long white gloves. Everything was going smoothly. Her gown fitted and had arrived on time, and they were going to dine with one of those splendid men who had made pots of money in South Africa. He would have to put something in Arthur's way, of course—his career was such a credit to her management. She believed in riding the crest of the fashionable wave—in the long run it pays—and the room made an opulent, handsome setting for their successful selves—all cretonne and wicker, brass bed and white wallpaper—nothing ponderous, nothing Victorian. Not like her unfortunate sister. Violet's husband grudged her even a new hat—a new hat, that is, with ospreys. He did not allow her a separate allowance, he made scenes when she ordered a pianola without consulting him, and he had not Arthur's thoughtfulness. It never occurred to him to bring home the latest Hall Caine or Marie Corelli, or a couple of tickets for *The Merry Widow*. Even now he would not allow Violet to read Victoria Cross or ride a bicycle. Yes, Kitty was satisfied with the picture in the wardrobe mirror. She inhaled the scent of Jockey Club, and above her sequins and chiffon the admired white bosom swelled with voluptuous triumph. She had everything woman could wish for; never again would she risk everything by going alone to visit a bachelor.

BARBARA FLETCHER

SECOND PRIZE

I

THE CATCH OF THE SEASON

CHAPTER I

"O lovely Woman, She who may
On her sweet self set her own price."

Lady Clara, nervously opening and furling her fan, gazed anxiously through the unshaded window into the London night. Herbert was late again, she reflected irritably; could it be that she was losing her attractiveness? With a little resolute movement she rose, and tucking her watch which she had just been consulting into her waistbelt, she crossed the apartment and stood before a plush-framed mirror in the full glare of the merciless gaslight. Critically she studied her appearance. Her hour-glass figure, which had been favourably compared to that of Miss Camille Clifford, her luxuriant hair which took Celeste so much time to confine artistically with the aid of numerous hairpins, her polished brow and classic features. Just for a moment she knew doubt. Should she have permitted Celeste to apply that soupçon of rouge to her (Lady Clara's) damask cheek? Dear Herbert frowned upon anything verging on the "fast." But the doubt swiftly passed. Celeste was an artist, and the mere male would surely be deluded into thinking that Nature's hues alone dyed her face. Even as this reflection entered her mind the strains of "The Honeysuckle and the Bee," which she had already heard rendered by barrel-organs in the Square at least four times that day, but now interpreted by a pleasing baritone, charmed her ear. At last her recalcitrant fiancé had arrived to escort her and dear Mamma to the Vaudeville to see the lovely Miss Zena Dare in *The Catch of the Season*. So appropriate.

NANCY GUNTER

II

Because it was contrary to all instinct to believe that anything Pa and Ma organised could be other than right and desirable, it did not occur to Alfred that he was not enjoying himself. In his mortar-board, Eton jacket and "long shorts," with Ma's black cape on one arm and a basket of provisions in the other hand, he followed his parents along the Godstone Road from Purley Station. It was August Bank Holiday, and in honour of this Pa had surmounted his everyday frock coat with a panama hat, and his feet were radiant in white canvas shoes with brown leather cross-pieces. Ma's raiment was conspicuous for a purple satin blouse, and her full black skirt was lifted to display high chrome buttoned boots (which Alfred had done up). A thick cloud of dust was co-terminous with the road, and the surface, cut into small dice by the occasional motor-cars, was scattered over the grass verge and the merrymaking populace. A strong sun beat down. Alfred, a gangling lad of thirteen, felt fortified by the catapult in one pocket and the green vilely-printed "blood" in another. He knew that if any of the "chaps" should encounter the expedition he would never hear the last of it at school next term. But he was grim in his generation, and about him was glorious downland. It was, in fact, a day in the country.

R. S. JAFFRAY

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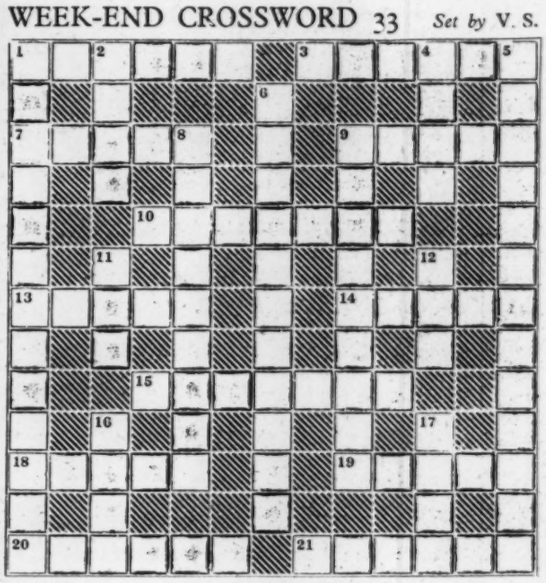
WEEK-END CROSSWORD 33

Set by V. S.



The last week's winner is:

Frank Evans, The Retreat, Weir Estate, Sunbury-on-Thames

ACROSS

1. Signal for the funny man to put on a toupée. (6)
3. Sailors have their eye on this swallow. (6)
7. Give them a thing to think about. (5)
9. A University man's *so* classical at bottom. (5)
10. The Countess must be somewhat out of her senses. (7)
13 (*rev.*). A pointer for the gardener. (5)
14. Should need no clue. (5)
15 (*rev.*). R=G.R. (7)
18. Homer had the use of his eyes as a boy, evidently. (5)
19 (*rev.*). Groundax. (5)
20. Prima donna, you're fired! (6)
21. Put on the street all the old folk. (6)

DOWN

1. See 2.
2 & 1. Leaves one speechless. (4, 7 & 6)
4. No use running. (4)
5. "Sea View's" situation. (4, 2, 3 & 4).
6. The Shrew under the Waves (6 hyphen 5)
8. Jack's not left without a penny. (9)
9. There's nothing better than being in debt! (9)
11. As for the flanks of the horse. (3)
12. For example No. 14, or No. 1. (3)
16. A good sort. (4)
17. Head of The Family à cheval? (4)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

RUNNING WAR INDUSTRIES FOR PROFIT—MINES AND THE E.P.T. CONCESSION—UNILEVER

A REVEALING letter was published in last Saturday's correspondence columns of the *Daily Telegraph*—strange to say—from the managing director of one of the smaller firms making munitions. He was complaining of our industrial policy, "which still seeks to reach maximum output of war supplies without seriously interfering with the competitive, individual and profit-making basis of our industrial system." He went on to say: "We are daily forced to do things which are contrary to the public interest . . . because the system imposes upon us, as a first consideration, the need for making our own living, insuring our future and securing our financial stability. . . . We work first for personal security and only secondly for national victory." This company, in order to speed production, offered to turn itself into a department of a larger unit formed of all the firms in a defined area. It was told that such a proposal could not be considered unless it was a spontaneous, voluntary move on the part of all the different interests concerned. This managing director came to the conclusion that we should never reach our maximum war effort until we had total industrial conscription. Most of us outside the business world agree with this frank and honest view of a business man. Unfortunately, the Government fought shy of industrial conscription at the beginning of the war. Instead, it invited the managing directors of private industry to manage the raw material controls and occupy the leading positions at the Ministry of Supply. In other words, instead of running "big business" in the interests of the nation, it invited the "big business" chiefs to run the nation—in the industrial sphere. Do not imagine that Mr. Oliver Lyttelton's scheme for concentration of production in the non-munition trades will mean industrial conscription. It may force mergers upon the short-time industries, if voluntary schemes of concentration are not adequate, but it will leave the mergers to be run for private profit and with various levies (payable by consumer or taxpayer) to compensate the closed-down firms. How long are we to wait for an industrial war system which is run for the benefit of the nation as a whole?

* * * *

The concessions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer made to the oil, tin, copper and gold-mining companies in regard to Excess Profits Tax have had little or no effect upon the share markets. This is understandable, because no one can translate the concessions into terms of tax-saving £ s. d. The Treasury required a mining company claiming the concessions to define (*a*) the extent of its natural deposits, (*b*) the date by which the deposits would have been exhausted but for the war, (*c*) the amount of additional output due (and essential) to the war, and (*d*) the profit at the "normal" rate on this additional profit. The Treasury will allow for an additional percentage on capital varying with the life of the mine, e.g., from 30 per cent. for a life ending in 1946-50 to 5 per cent. in 1961-70. The trouble is that no accountant can accurately estimate the life of wasting assets such as oil, tin or copper deposits. Being hidden from the naked eye, these deposits cannot be accurately measured by any known scientific instruments. They can only be guessed, although in the case of gold the guessing can be fairly accurate. The effect of Excess Profits Tax on the Rhodesian copper companies (which have been reducing their dividends) and on the tin mines which are producing at 130 per cent. of standard to provide America with a war reserve, is so important that the Chancellor should translate his overdue concessions into practicable terms without further delay. It is something to learn that a deputation of Members of Parliament waited on the Chancellor this week and discussed the question of making these concessions more definite and allowing a more adequate percentage of profit on the increased output of the mines. The investor meanwhile cannot tell where he stands.

* * *

No ordinary dividend is being paid on the ordinary stock of Lever Brothers and Unilever—although at least 10 per cent. would be justified by the results—because of the "equalisation of equity" agreement between the British and Dutch companies. Profits earned in 1940 were only slightly below those of 1939. This should remind investors that the 7 per cent. and 8 per cent. preference shares, which have a first call on the earnings of the British company, are a cheap investment. I draw special attention to the 8 per cent. preference shares at 25*s.* 4½*d.* which yield £6 7*s.* per cent. I would sooner buy these preference shares than those of County of London Electric Supply which yield only £3 18*s.* 6*d.* per cent. The low yield on the latter is all the more extraordinary, seeing that the ordinary shares of County of London Electric at 30*s.* 6*d.* yield £5 4*s.* per cent. on the dividend of 8 per cent., which appears to be covered by earnings of about 11 per cent. The over-all dividend on the preference shares is little more than twice. Either the preference shares are valued too highly or the ordinary shares too cheaply.

IMPERIAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LTD.

EXPANSION OF TRADE

THE fourteenth annual general meeting of Imperial Chemical Industries, Limited, will be held in London on May 29.

The following is a summary of the statement, issued with the report and accounts, by the chairman, Lord McGowan:

In the home trade the war has been the source, direct or indirect, of ever-increasing requirements for nearly all our products and in general the company's factories at home worked to full capacity.

In particular, we had during the year to meet increased demands owing to the reduction or cessation of competing imports, to the necessity to expand agricultural production at home and to the fact that many of our goods are of direct importance in the manufacture of war material.

At our meeting last year I told you something of our price policy. We were able in 1940 to continue the course I described for our main products almost up to the close of the year. But the growing pressure of rising costs outside our own control then forced us to advance certain prices in the home trade and to warn our customers that we might have to make further increases.

War-time conditions have presented us with new problems affecting the company's activities overseas. I need not tell you we have not neglected our export trade. This branch of business is still of great national importance, for it furnishes purchasing power to pay for imported materials vital to the war effort. We have therefore regarded it as a duty to do everything possible to maintain our exports.

We have had to meet the difficulties of irregular shipping facilities and progressively more severe exchange control, while the demand abroad for the company's products in many cases increased owing to the cessation of supplies from enemy sources. The practical steps taken by the Government to foster export trade, notably the organisation of the Export Council and Export Groups, the extension of export credit facilities and the establishment of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation, have proved of great assistance in this sphere.

Our main manufacturing subsidiary or associated companies in the British Empire—Imperial Chemical Industries of Australia and New Zealand Limited, Canadian Industries Limited, and African Explosives and Industries Limited—continued to prosper and expand. Their object, like ours, is to serve the Empire need to the full. In sympathy with the urgent necessity in war conditions for local sources of supply, they continue to expand their own manufacturing capacity.

The total gross income shown in the consolidated income statement is £18,375,000, compared with £15,343,000 for 1939. This increase of £3,032,000 is chiefly due to additional manufacturing and trading profits brought about by the larger volume of business. Net consolidated income, however, has declined from £7,678,000 to £6,756,000, a fall of £922,000. The factor which almost alone turns an increase of £3,032,000 in gross income into a reduction of £922,000 in net income is the charge for taxation. The net taxation burden to be borne by the company and its subsidiaries is £7,385,000 against £3,654,000 in the previous year, an increase of £3,731,000.

The effect of special war taxation on our results for 1940 may be illustrated by the fact that 70 per cent. of our consolidated income is required for taxation, 25 per cent. for net dividends to stockholders, and only 5 per cent. goes to free reserves of the company and its subsidiaries. For 1939 these figures were respectively 51 per cent., 35 per cent. and 14 per cent. In the consolidated balance-sheet the totals of current assets and current liabilities show considerable increases which reflect both the expansion of trade and the increased taxation liability. The surplus of combined assets over combined liabilities and share capital rose from £14,666,000 to £16,204,000 during the year. The company's total reserves and carry-forward amounted at December 31, 1940, to £21,147,000, an increase of £3,000,000 over the corresponding total last year.

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